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TRADITIONAL TIBETAN SONGS, INSTRUMENTS,  
AND A *DMANGS GLU* SINGER IN  
MDO BA (DUOWA) TOWN, MTSHO SNGON  
(QINGHAI) PROVINCE, PR CHINA  
Chos skyong skyabs ཆོས་སྒྱུང་སྒྱུབ་པ། (Qiejiangjia 切江加)\*,<sup>1</sup>

ABSTRACT

This article focuses on pastoral Mdo ba (Duowa) Town, Thun rin (Tongren) City, Rma lho (Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon (Qinghai) Province, PR China. I examine my personal experiences related to local *dmangs glu* and *la ye*, traditional songs (*dmangs glu/glu* 'folk songs', *la ye (la gzhas)* 'love songs', and *rdung len* 'singing with Tibetan lute and mandolin'), local musical instruments (*sgra snyan* 'mandolin', *mnga' ris sgra snyan* 'Tibetan lute', and *gling bu* 'flute'), a local *dmangs glu* singer (Sgrol ma skyabs, b. 1978), and the results of surveys on attitudes toward traditional Tibetan songs among locals in Mdo ba Town and students in a boarding primary school in a pastoral area in Mgo log (Guoluo) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon Province. Five photographs are included.

KEYWORDS

Tibetan traditional songs, Tibetan folk songs, herding life, Tibetan Plateau, Tibetan song culture, *dmangs glu* (folksongs), Tibetan *rdung len*, Tibetan love songs

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<sup>1</sup> I thank three anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments.

## THE SETTING

## ONE: LO SAR 'TIBETAN NEW YEAR' 2005

On the fifth day of Lo sar, I<sup>1</sup> (b. 1994) was waiting for my cousin and friend, Gnam thar tshe ring<sup>2</sup> (b. 1991), at my home in my family's winter pasture. Gnam thar tshe ring lived with his family only a half-kilometer away, but we couldn't see each other's homes because a small hill was between our adobe houses. I was ready to start to Sgrol ma skyabs'<sup>3</sup> (b. 1978) home, dressed in my best clothes - old blue jeans that my mother had washed before Lo sar, so they looked almost new, and my newest Tibetan brown robe. My three-year-old black knee-high leather boots also looked new, as I only wore them on special days. They were tight and hurt my feet if I walked very far.

Before Gnam thar tshe ring arrived, Mother said, "Please go the day after tomorrow, or I'll worry about you two. It's not safe. Listen! There are many homeless dogs near the Town Center. Uncle Brtan pa isn't available today, but he can take you guys to Sgrol ma skyabs' home the day after tomorrow."

"Gnam thar tshe ring and I already decided to visit today, and Sgrol ma skyabs must be waiting for us now," I replied.

About ten minutes later, Gnam thar tshe ring appeared and suggested we leave. Sgrol ma skyabs' home is nine kilometers from our winter pasture home. Gnam thar tshe ring and I visit him annually on the fifth or sixth days of the New Year.

We walked for about a half-hour and then stopped a man on a motorcycle. "May we ride behind you, please?" I asked the driver.

"Boys, where are you going?" he asked.

After learning our destination, he told us to hop on. A short time later, he dropped us off at the Town Center,<sup>4</sup> two kilometers

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, the first person references in this paper indicate Chos skyong skyabs.

<sup>2</sup> Gnam thar tshe ring and Sgrol ma skyabs are my maternal grandfather's (Gcod las, b. 1937) older brother's son's sons.

<sup>3</sup> The names of this man and his family members have been changed.

<sup>4</sup> See <https://bit.ly/3L77Nsa> 10 September 2022 for a ten-minute video of the Town Center in 2019. Mdo ba Township 'xiang' became a town

from Sgrol ma skyabs' home. We then walked, eager to enjoy Sgrol ma skyabs' hospitality and hear his songs.

"Ao na ye ..." Sgrol ma skyabs sang a *sgrung glu* 'epic song'<sup>1</sup> when he saw us, a greeting different from others we knew.

The next section describes my personal experiences with love songs.

## TWO: LOVE SONG GATHERINGS

Two gatherings are described. The first is an example of a local camp gathering held in 2003 and earlier, according to traditional practice. The second describes activity at *na chung rtse* 'love song clubs' in the Mbo ba Town Center. In 2022, neither of these types of gatherings was held.

### Local Camp Gathering

My earliest memory of local love song gatherings was in 2003 when I was nine. About ten families were in the summer pasture in white canvas tents arranged fifty to one hundred meters apart in a line just north of a small stream. Food at around nine PM was generally noodles cooked with yak meat. After eating, some local teenagers and young unmarried adults shouted, signaling a night gathering. My mother didn't allow me to attend.

However, once in the seventh lunar month in 2003, after being told I was too young, I slipped away from my family tent and attended one of these night gatherings. There were about fifteen attendees, both males and females. I followed them to a small valley surrounded by mountains where a small stream flowed. The upper part of the valley was narrow, while the shady lower side was wide and covered by dense rhododendrons. We went into the valley to a point where we couldn't see our tents, and our family members couldn't hear us. We made a small fire with rhododendron bushes and sat on the grass-covered ground with girls on one side and boys

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'zhen' in 2014 <https://bit.ly/3DFKD8Z> 4 November 2022).

<sup>1</sup> Sgrol ma skyabs sang Ge sar epic songs he heard and learned from the radio beginning in about 2005.

on the other. I sat next to one of my cousins. Boys flirted with girls who giggled and sometimes loudly laughed as they responded when boys whistled and pulled their clothes.

Several minutes later, the boys' side began singing *la ye* (*la gzhas*) songs, and the girls sang back. The gathering was full of excited laughter as the singers communicated and flirted through *la ye*.

By the time I was a teenager, most families had radio-tape players bringing singing into homes in ways that had never occurred before. Singing was now immediately available at the touch of a button, and songs on tapes could be played repeatedly. Additionally, most children attended school. There were no more gatherings as described above.

### *Na chung rtsed ra* 'Love Song Clubs'

Between the ages of fourteen and sixteen, I frequently went to *na chung rtsed ra* 'love song clubs' at night, the only activity centers in the local township town. Locals operated three such clubs in the township town. They opened around seven PM and closed early the next morning. I most frequently attended Klu mo's Club next to the main road in an old concrete block building with a tile roof. The three clubs had no names or signboards. They were distinguished only by their managers' names.<sup>1</sup> (This was all local knowledge.)

You entered Klu mo's Club through a small wooden door from the main road. Inside were two rooms. The entry room had a billiard table, no windows, and a doorway that opened into a second, slightly larger room. The ceiling of this inner room was decorated with colorful cloth and had a rotating disco-ball light. Chinese-language newspapers covered the upper part of the walls. A metal stove that burned yak-dung and coal was in the room center. Three or four long wooden benches and tables were near the walls.

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<sup>1</sup> The other two clubs were referred to as Sangs rgyas' Club and Rta kho's Club.

Klu mo, a local woman in her twenties, sang *la ye* very well and managed the club. She sold Tsingtao and Snowflake beer, Sprite, Pepsi, cigarettes, and instant noodles. Typically, the club was frequented by about thirty locals under forty (married and unmarried), including some ten women, who came at night, drank, and listened to *la ye*. Local men came to the club with long knives in sheaths attached to their sashes and *mgo skor* 'dog-beaters'.<sup>1</sup> The club typically closed when intoxicated customers began fighting.

Usually, around nine PM, Klu mo would sing *rtse mgo* 'beginning' and then hand the microphone and a *kha btags* 'silk strip' to a man. Klu mo and the man would sing antiphonally before others sang.

The love song clubs had shut down by 2011. By then, TV and cell phones were very ordinary, and locals had lost interest in these clubs to have fun and meet each other. Another reason was a local resident opened a tea house in our township town in 2010. Tea houses soon replaced the love song clubs. Local young people were more attracted to the tea houses with their interior decorations and comfortable sofas and tables. It was also a place to drink beer and gamble by 2011. The local love song clubs could not compete.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper examines traditional Tibetan songs and instruments based on Yo lag (Zhiyu) Village,<sup>2</sup> Mdo ba Town,<sup>3</sup> Thun rin City, Rma lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon Province, PR China. I specifically investigate local traditional songs (*dmangs glu* or *glu* 'folk songs', *la ye* 'love songs', and *rdung len* 'sung with Tibetan lute and mandolin'); descriptions of local musical

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<sup>1</sup> Locals use dog-beaters in fights with others and when attacked by dogs (hence the name). The local version is a piece of yak-leather one to two meters long and about one centimeter wide. At the end is affixed a piece of metal. The dog-beater is whirled to injure an enemy or a dog with the metal at the end of the leather strip.

<sup>2</sup> Yo lag was officially classified as a *cun* 'village' and was at 35°27'16"N, 102°22'96"E.

<sup>3</sup> Mdo ba was home to 1,419 households (7,291 people) in 2020 (<https://bit.ly/3Oln6PA> 18 November 2022).

instruments (*sgra snyan* 'mandolin', *mnga' ris sgra snyan*<sup>1</sup> 'Tibetan lute', and *gling bu* 'flute'); the results of two inquiries into the current *dmangs glu* situation in Mdo ba and Sder nang (De'ang);<sup>2</sup> certain of my personal experiences related to local *dmangs glu* and *la ye* songs; *dmangs glu* preservation efforts in the Mtsho sngon area; and Sgrol ma skyabs' life story and songs. Sgrol ma skyabs is locally recognized for singing at *khang ston* 'new house celebrations', when *gya ston* 'eighty-year-old celebrations' were held for local elders, and particularly for singing responses to what others sang at *bag ston* 'local weddings'. Sgrol ma skyabs' life experiences and family background characterize a traditional local family. Between 5 February and 7 March 2022, I visited his home, as mentioned at the start of this article, and his winter pasture home in Yo lag Village. I collected more information, recorded the interviews, and translated portions of the audio material into English. Four of Sgrol ma skyabs' *dmangs glu* are provided as performed (Wylie and Tibetan script), in literary poetic text (Wylie and Tibetan script), and in English translation. Additional material includes four maps offering a broader context for the A mdo (Anduo) pastoral songscape.

In 2022, Yo lag had a population of about 262 households (1,315 people). It was in the southeast of Rma lho Prefecture, bordering Bsang chu (Xiahe) County, Kan lho (Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Kan su'u (Gansu) Province. Most residents were herders, and at this time, income was primarily from selling livestock and caterpillar fungus.

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<sup>1</sup> *Mnga' ris sgra snyan* 'Ngari's lute'.

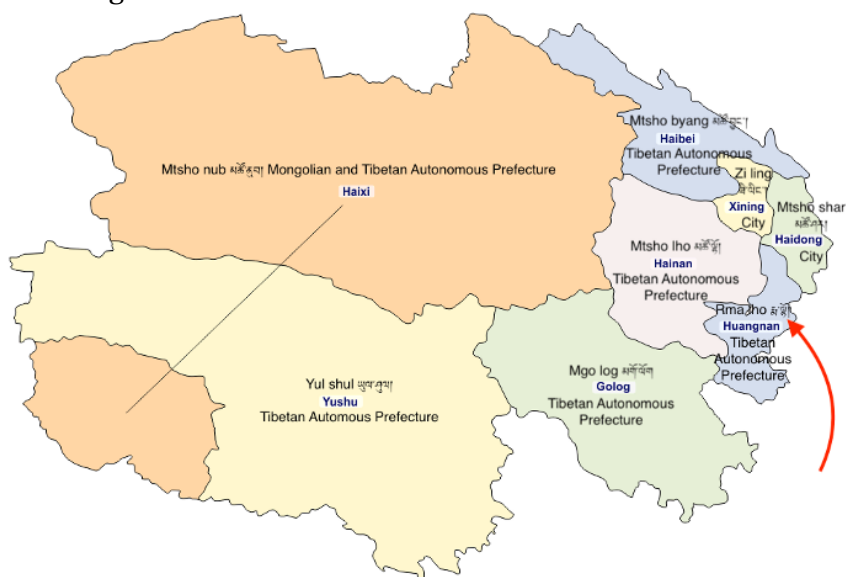
<sup>2</sup> Located in Dar lag (Dari) County, Mgo log (Guoluo) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mstho sngon Province.

## MAPS

### PR China.<sup>1</sup>



### Mtsho sngon Province.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> An edited version of <https://bit.ly/3izeNnb> 6 December 2022.

<sup>2</sup> An edited version of <https://bit.ly/3B8qoSj> 6 December 2022.

## Thun rin City.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> An edited version of <https://bit.ly/3xHEoiF> 21 September 2022.



## Yo lag Village.<sup>1</sup>



## LOCAL TRADITIONAL SONGS

Drawing on the literature, I describe terms for *dmangs glu/glu*, *la ye*, and *rdung len* in this section. Ethnographic accounts of usage and understandings of these terms from Mdo ba residents follow

<sup>1</sup> An edited version of <https://bit.ly/3BAbgLo> 21 September 2022.

this.<sup>1</sup> I do not suggest these local understandings, and the terms I use are "standard" for the vast, diverse Tibetosphere.

### *DMANGS GLU/GLU*

The term *dmangs glu* may originate from the Chinese 民歌 *minge* 'folk songs' translated into Tibetan. For example, Sher don et al. (2021) give *dmangs glu* for 民歌 (738). For *dmangs glu*, Huadan Zhaxi et al. (1994) provide folk song, ballad (222); Goldstein et al. (2001) list folk song/ballad; and Bell (1920), Joschke (1881), Pad+ma rdo rje (1989), Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las (2002), and Stag 'bum thar (2016) do not give this term. See Thurston (2012:57), Anton-Luca (2002:179), Craun (2011:79), G.yang skyabs rdo rje (2021:306), Skal bzang rdo rje (2021:13), Sturman (2019:3), Snying mo tshe ring (2017:21), and Li (2008:74) for brief remarks on *dmangs glu*.

*Dmangs glu* or *glu*<sup>2</sup> performed in Mdo ba include *bstod glu* 'praise songs', *glu shags* 'humorous songs',<sup>3</sup> *bcol glu* 'entrusting/enjoining songs', *skyo glu* 'sad songs', *sbra ston gyi glu* 'new tent celebratory songs', *ne'u ston gyi glu* 'songs for three-year-old sons', and *gya ston gyi glu* 'songs for eighty-year-olds' (Lhun 'grub 2020).

Local traditional songs include *la ye* and *rdung len*, each

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<sup>1</sup> To my knowledge, there were no *mgur glu* 'spiritual songs', although such songs were common if declining in popularity, in nearby Tibetan and Tu (Monguor) communities in 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Before about 2005, locals generally used the term *glu* to refer to what later came to be known as *dmangs glu*. The influence of radio and TV was instrumental in this shift in terms.

<sup>3</sup> Sangs rgyas bkra shis et al. (2015) write:

... *glu shags* are generally sung by people fifteen to fifty years old. They are sung antiphonally, and tease, insult, and embarrass those they are sung to. The content might include the appearance of an individual, a family, or a community; clothing; being impoverished; and a poor singing voice. Curses, overt sexual language, and family ancestry are avoided. The lack of sexual content means that *glu shags* are often sung at wedding parties, singing competitions, and other secular gatherings as an entertainment (20).

Sangs rgyas bkra shis is a native of Gcan tsha thang (Jianzhatang) Township, Gcan tsha (Jianzha) County, Rma lho Prefecture.

with particular melodies, lyrics, and singing circumstances. For example, locals never use a *glu* melody with *la ye* lyrics or a *la ye* melody with *glu* lyrics. *Glu* and *la ye* singers from the local community sing at local weddings, other gatherings such as *chos ston* 'religious meetings' and feasts, and during Lo sar. They also sing *la ye* on the mountains while herding. A singer may employ various *glu* melodies with the same *glu* lyrics and the same for *la ye*.

Some local *la ye* singers play the mandolin while singing *la ye*. Such songs are referred to as *la ye* or *la ye rdung len* owing to their lyrics and melody.

In 2022, most *glu* melodies began with "'o ye...." However, resident Sha bo skyabs (b. 1975) said that when he was a child, local singers began *glu* with *zhang ya re...*, *ldong gi la la...*, *lo yang gi lo...*, and *a spun kho...* New *glu* melodies in 2022 were explained as coming from outside Mdo ba, e.g., "'ba' la yang la mo..., and *ma mgur rgan lo...*"

*Glu* lyrics consist of metaphors and similes. In most cases, there are three stanzas, with the first two being metaphors and the third being a simile, e.g.:

<sup>1</sup>rta 'do ba jag la 'khyer dus su  
<sup>2</sup>sa byang lam gcod pa dpe zhig red  
<sup>3</sup>lcag phra mos mi 'brab khas len byed  
<sup>4</sup>khyod rta bdag sems kha bde mo byos

<sup>1</sup>mdzo khyung dkar tshong la 'ded dus su  
<sup>2</sup>'dis khal 'khur byed pa dpe zhig red  
<sup>3</sup>rdo gor mos mi rgyag khas len byed  
<sup>4</sup>khyod mdzo bdag sems kha bde mo byos

<sup>1</sup>sman bu mo gnas la 'gro dus su  
<sup>2</sup>lag las ka slob pa dpe zhig red  
<sup>3</sup>tshig kha log mi rgyag khas len byed  
<sup>4</sup>drin ma lo'i sems kha bde mo byos

<sup>1</sup>རྟ་འདྲ་བ་ཇག་ལ་འབྱེར་དུས་སྟུ།

<sup>2</sup>ས་བྱང་ལམ་གཙོད་པ་དཔེ་ཟིག་རེད།

<sup>3</sup>ལྷག་པ་མེས་མི་འབྲུག་ལས་ལེན་བྱེད།

<sup>4</sup>ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་བདག་ལྷན་ཁ་བདེ་མོ་བྱས།

<sup>1</sup>མཛོ་ཁྱེད་དཀར་ཚང་ལ་འདྲེད་དུས་སྟུ།

<sup>2</sup>འདིས་ཁལ་འཁྱར་བྱེད་པ་དཔེ་ཞིག་རེད།

<sup>3</sup>རྒྱ་གར་མེས་མི་ལྷག་ལས་ལེན་བྱེད།

<sup>4</sup>ཁྱེད་མཛོ་བདག་ལྷན་ཁ་བདེ་མོ་བྱས།

<sup>1</sup>ལྷན་བྱ་མོ་གནས་ལ་འགོ་དུས་སྟུ།

<sup>2</sup>ལག་ལས་ཀ་སློབ་པ་དཔེ་ཞིག་རེད།

<sup>3</sup>ལྷག་ལས་ལེན་མི་ལྷག་ལས་ལེན་བྱེད།

<sup>4</sup>དྲིན་མ་འདི་ལྷན་ཁ་བདེ་མོ་བྱས།

<sup>1</sup>When riding a horse on a bandit raid

<sup>2</sup>A long journey is common

<sup>3</sup>I promise not to whip it at all

<sup>4</sup>You, the horse owner, be assured of this

<sup>1</sup>When we drive a *mdzo* on business

<sup>2</sup>Goods must be packed on it

<sup>3</sup>I promise not to throw stones at the *mdzo*

<sup>4</sup>You, the *mdzo* owner, be assured of this

<sup>1</sup>When a girl marries and moves to the groom's home

<sup>2</sup>It is common to teach her how to do home chores

<sup>3</sup>I promise not to scold her

<sup>4</sup>You, the mother, be assured of this<sup>1</sup>

This song is a response to an entrusting song by the groom's side to the bride's side at a wedding. The first two stanzas invoke a horse and *mdzo*. The song suggests the bride, which is mentioned in the third stanza - the simile. In contrast, *rdung len* (more below) lyrics are not necessarily metaphors and similes.

While *dmangs glu* and *glu* are often translated as "folk

<sup>1</sup> I have altered certain of the English translations of these lyrics from Lhun 'grub et al. (2020:91-92).

songs," I use *dmangs glu*/*glu*, *la ye*, and *rdung len* in this paper because all three are "folk songs" in the context of *The Oxford English Dictionary* definition: "Folk-song: a song originating from the common people; also, a modern imitation of such a song" (Simpson and Weiner 1989:(5):1,143).

When I asked my maternal grandfather, "When you were a child, did you hear the term '*dmangs glu*'?" he replied:

I didn't hear that term [*dmangs glu*] until around 2000. I first heard it on the radio. It is a new term. *Glu* refers to only one song type sung at weddings today. I remember that *Glu* and *la ye* were the most popular songs in Mdo ba. *Glu* were sung at local weddings, during *Lo sar*, *chos hog* gatherings,<sup>1</sup> and *bzhi ba'i smyung gnas* 'fasting rituals'.<sup>2</sup>

Locally, *dmangs glu* and *glu* have the same meaning, referring to local traditional songs sung at local weddings and during *Lo sar*.

I asked three other locals born between 1988 and 1992 what locals understood *dmangs glu* and *glu* to mean. They agreed 83s were the same and interchangeable. An example was given of someone asked to sing *glu* or *dmangs glu* at a local gathering with

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<sup>1</sup> *Chos thog* is locally held once annually beginning on the first day of the eighth lunar month. At the *chos thog* gathering I attended in 2017, about fifty monks from Dar zhing (Dar zhing bde 'dzoms dga' tshal gling, a Dge lugs monastery founded in 1666 by G.yu rngog bsam gtan rgya mtsho and sponsored by Bde chen bya btang kun dga' chos 'phels (Reb gong pa 'jigs med bsam grub 2013:539-543) located in Mgar rtse (Guashize) Village, Chu khog (Qukuhu) Township, Reb gong City) chanted for ten days on grassland by a large *bsang khri* 'incense burning platform' near Mdo ba Town Center. Before the monks arrived, locals pitched a large tent. Monks chanted, ate, and most slept in the tent or stayed in the homes of relatives living nearby. Local men took turns preparing food in the *ja rus* 'kitchen tent' near the monks' tent and serving the monks. During breaks in chanting, especially at noon and if there was no rain, local elders arranged four or five local singers to offer *glu* praising local *bla ma*, monks, monasteries, and temples. The audience included local monks, women, children, and men. For a short video of the 2019 gathering, see <https://tinyurl.com/4my9hzvu> 5 November 2022).

<sup>2</sup> See Pad+ma rig 'dzin's (2021) study of a Mdo ba Town fasting gathering <https://bit.ly/3UyGTOB> 22 September 2022.

no one hesitating because they immediately understood the type of song requested.

Several *glu* subtypes that might be sung are determined by lyric content such as *ja glu* 'tea-song', *bstod glu* 'praise song', *rten 'bril gyi glu* 'celebratory song', *bkra shis 'jog pa'i glu* 'goodbye song', and *bcol glu* 'entrusting song'.

From 2012-2022, I attended about fifteen local weddings. Each wedding typically had a gathering at the groom's home and another at the bride's home. When the bride's entourage (generally all men) arrived at the groom's home and were seated, one of the bride's retinues sang *ja glu* asking for a meal while, at the same time, presenting a *kha btags* followed by a *ja dar* 'tea-silk' (generally, a strip of silk about three meters in length and one meter in width).

After the meal, *bstod glu* was sung antiphonally. If the bride's side did not respond in song, a woman from the groom's side flung water in a dipper at them. However, one or more of the bride's side representatives generally sang well and responded to singing from the groom's side.

Wedding attendees are mostly the bride's or groom's relatives and community members, depending on the location of the home gathering,<sup>1</sup> and are pleased to attend. Singers sing *rten 'bril gyi glu* wishing auspiciousness and congratulations.

Toward the end of the gathering, each side may sing only one *bkra shis 'jog pa'i glu*, and at the very end, one of the bride's closest relatives may sing a *bcol glu* 'entrusting song' indicating the bride is now a member of the groom's family and should care for her. The groom's side might respond, assuring they will treat the bride as their daughter.

Although *la ye* were not sung at local weddings, this was not true for all A mdo (Anduo) Tibetan weddings, e.g., Klu thar rgyal (2022:134-135).

*Dmangs glu* usually consist of three stanzas, each with four verses and each verse consisting of six to nine syllables. The first and second stanzas are metaphors, and the third is a simile. Here

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<sup>1</sup> Weddings were held at homes in 2022, mainly because the Mdo ba Town Center had no restaurants large enough to accommodate large wedding parties.

are three examples of what local singers might sing after the first stanza:

ONE (sung by G.yung drung rgyal (b. 1976) after a first stanza)

Glu bar mo bar nas gnang nga zig  
 Forgive me for skipping the middle stanza

TWO (sung by 'Brug thar (b. 1988) after a first stanza)

Glu bar mo 'di dang gcig 'dra yin  
 The middle stanza is the same as the first one

THREE (sung by Klu sgron skyabs (b. 1968) after a first stanza)

Glu bar mo dbugs kyis mi lcogs gi  
 Can't sing the second stanza well.

*Dmangs glu* begin with 'o ye... Singers do not necessarily stand while singing at local traditional weddings. When performing *dmangs glu*, the singer's left-hand touches their left cheek, the upper body is bent a bit forward if the singer sits cross-legged, and the singer's right hand is placed on the right knee with the elbow raised so that the left arm resembles a bow.

*Dmangs glu* lyrics reflect local life, beliefs, and worldviews except during a time of chaos beginning in 1966 when many *dmangs glu* lyrics were altered due to the 'Smash the Four Olds' (culture, customs, habits, and ideas) movement. For example, Rta rdo (b. 1964) recalled lyrics praising the Communist Party and leaders and gave this example:

Tang gung kgran dkong gi nyi ma red  
 Ma'o kru'u zhi dgong gi nyi ma red

ཏང་གུང་ཁྲན་དཀོང་གི་ཉི་མ་རེད།  
 མཎོ་ཀུ་འུ་ཞི་དཀོང་གི་ཉི་མ་རེད།

The Communist Party is the sun in the sky

Chairman Mao is our sun<sup>1</sup>

In 2022, such lyrics had vanished.

### *LA YE*

The term "*la ye*" is absent in Joschke (1881), Das (1902), Bell (1920), Pad+ma rdo rje (1989), Huadan Zhaxi et al. (1994), and Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las (2002). Goldstein (2001) suggests *la ye* are songs sung on mountains by herders (1057), and Stag 'bum thar (2016) suggests *la ye* are a mountain song, a type of A mdo song with most verses consisting of seven words with the content about love between men and women (601).<sup>2</sup>

Romantic relationships are often the subject of *la ye* and are taboo when family members, relatives, *bla ma*, and monks are present. Normally, *la ye* activity does not begin if relatives and elders are in attendance.

Local *la ye* generally have two stanzas with metaphors, e.g., horse, sheep, birds, water, and so on. The second stanza is a simile: "My lover, I like you, want to marry you, want to make love to you."

Love songs are sung on the mountains while grazing animals in the daytime and when night-dating.<sup>3</sup> Local *dmangs glu* and *la ye* were the most popular song types in Mdo ba until about 2010.

According to Gcod pa don grub (2019), *la ye* performed in Mtso sngon, Gan lho, and Si khron (Sichuan) include *rtse mgo* 'songs of beginning', *rogs mthun pa'i skor* 'songs of loving', *rogs dran pa'i skor* 'songs of longing', *rogs 'gal ba'i skor* 'break up songs', *rogs rtsod pa'i skor* 'quarreling songs', and *bde mo 'jog pa'i skor*

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<sup>1</sup> See also Anton-Luca (2002:117) for an example of altered lyrics during this period:

Mo khyod ni gung chin thon yon You are a member of the Young Communist League,

Pho nga ni gung khran tang yon And I am a member of the Communist Party,  
Zhe snang ba spyi tshogs ring lugs red This feeling we share is for Socialism.

<sup>2</sup> For more on these three terms, see Appendix: Terms.

<sup>3</sup> Night-dating is a traditional way to meet current or potential lovers. Men typically visit unmarried women at night hoping to have sex.



'farewell songs'.

## RDUNG LEN

*Rdung len* is not listed by Joschke (1881), Das (1902), Bell (1920), Pad+ma rdo rje (1989), Huadan Zhaxi et al. (1994), Goldstein (2001), Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las (2002), and Stag 'bum thar (2016).

*Rdung len* refers to songs with accompaniment from the Tibetan lute or mandolin (Thurston 2019, Lama Jabb 2011), literally meaning playing and singing (Collinge 2020, Craun 2011, Morcom 2011). The term *rdung len* locally also refers to "...songs in A mdo Tibetan dialect accompanied by mandolin and increasingly nowadays with synthesized music and a beat" (Morcom 2017:11). The Tibetan lute did not become popular among A mdo Tibetans until Dpal mgon's (b. 1948) first performance on the Mtsho sngon Tibetan Broadcast Station in 1979 (Craun 2011).<sup>1</sup> Dpal mgon and his student, Gdu b+he<sup>2</sup> (1968-2016; aka Dubey, Doobey, Dubhe), were the well-known *rdung len* song performers Mdo ba people first became aware of. For example, as a child, my family listened to Dpal mgon's *A khu pad ma*<sup>3</sup> and *Snying rje na rje rgyu gan na 'dug* on my family's radio around supper time at home. My hands unconsciously moved in imitation of a *rdung len* performer when I listened to his performance, especially his *A khu pad ma*.

Today, piano, drum set, guitar, and other instruments may

<sup>1</sup> Dpal mgon (b. 1949) from Rma chu (Maqu) County, Kan lho (Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Kan su'u Province graduated from the Department of Medicine, Northwest University for Nationalities in 1970. See <https://bit.ly/3cYRuky> 9 September 2022 for an example of one of his songs.

<sup>2</sup> Gdu b+he from Rma chu County was considered one of the most accomplished mandolin performers and singers. See (1-20) <https://bit.ly/3U4XLvL> (21-40) <https://bit.ly/3S6ufnc>, (41-60) <https://bit.ly/3U7CvW1>, (61-80) <https://bit.ly/3Ud9M2f>, and (81-100) <https://bit.ly/3LcyDyW> for examples of his performances 21 June 2022.

<sup>3</sup> See the video version <https://bit.ly/3xnzkQi> 14 September 2022 of Dpal mgon's first well-known *rdung len* performance from the Mtsho sngon Tibetan Broadcast Station in 1979.

accompany *rdung len* and modern songs.<sup>1</sup> For instance, the Seventh A mdo *rdung len* competition winner in 2020, Skal bzang bkra shis,<sup>2</sup> was accompanied by the mandolin, guitar, cajon, flute, and two Tibetan lutes.

A difference between local *dmangs glu*, *la ye*, and *rdung len* is that *rdung len* is written by one or two people and performed by another person, e.g., the lyrics of *Mthun sgril gyi rang sgra* 'Song of Unity' were composed by Stag lha rgyal, the melody by Gdu b+he, and Sher bstan<sup>3</sup> sang it. The content of *rdung len* lyrics includes praise of landscape and venerable people (*bla ma*, monks, and local elders). It expresses such emotions as missing family members and expressing happiness at a gathering of friends. In contrast, local *dmangs glu* are not composed by specific people but are orally transmitted from generation to generation with little change in lyrics, melodies, and performance characteristics.

By 2000, almost every local family had a radio that provided initial contact with *rdung len* songs that local youth soon favored. At this time, locals bought radio-tape players and tapes and listened to and imitated singers performing *rdung len*, such as Gdu b+he and Nam mkha'.<sup>4</sup>

After 2004, the township town had electricity, and locals began watching TV programs and pirated cheap VCDs with low-quality sound and images featuring *rdung len* and modern songs. Youth enjoyed performances by the G·yu 'brug Band,<sup>5</sup> the Ri

<sup>1</sup> "Modern songs" as used here refers to Western song style and singing with electronic musical instruments, accordion, piano, harmonica, synthesizer, trombone, saxophone, electric guitar, and drums.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://bit.ly/3LzNSSK> 1 October 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Sher bstan (b. 1982) is a well-known *rdung len* and modern song singer, from Gcig sgril (Jiuzhi) County, Mgo log Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho ngon Province. See <https://bit.ly/3BduWoN> 6 December 2022 for one of his performances.

<sup>4</sup> Nam mkha' (b. 1973), a well-known *rdung len* singer, is from Thun te (Tongde) County, Mtsho lho (Hainan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho ngon Province. For an example of one of his songs, see <https://bit.ly/3DmovPi> 21 June 2022).

<sup>5</sup> The G.yu 'brug Band, established in 2005, had four members from Rma chu County. See <https://bit.ly/3qCSjCF> 21 June 2022 for one of their performances.

spyang Band,<sup>1</sup> and Bde skyid tshe ring,<sup>2</sup> indicating diminishing interest in local traditional songs. They found modern instruments and music videos (MV) more attractive. Furthermore, local youths attended schools that separated them from frequent interaction with and exposure to local song culture. This rapidly declining interest in local traditional songs among youth was common in other Rma lho areas. For example, Phun tshogs dbang rgyal and Qi (2017) comment about Rma lho (Henan) Mongolian Autonomous County:

During the New Year of 2016, I heard not one dmangs glu nor a single rdung len. Furthermore, locals' enthusiasm for singing parties had been replaced by an interest in card parties and listening and posting rdung len on such smartphone apps as Skad 'phrin (WeChat, Weixin), Changba, and PaPa (72-121).

## LOCAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

This section describes the local flute, mandolin, and Tibetan lute in Mdo ba.

The local flute was rarely played in 2022, while the mandolin and Tibetan lute were popular in the early fifteen years of the twenty-first century but much less so today. I vividly recall a mandolin player, Stag lha tshe ring (b. 1986), who I herded with in the summer pasture in 2003. He was skilled at the mandolin, which he played to herders (including me) who circled him when we herded yaks, sheep, and horses on the mountains. He sang various songs while playing, holding our attention.

When Sha bo don 'grub (b. 1990), one of my paternal cousins, was fourteen, his father asked him if he wanted a bicycle or a mandolin. He chose a mandolin and soon became a good player.

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<sup>1</sup> The Ri spyang Band, established in 2007, was the first pop metal band in Tibetan areas of China with members from Mtsho lho and Rma lho Tibetan autonomous prefectures. See <https://bit.ly/3dlzyjY> 21 June 2022 for one of their performances.

<sup>2</sup> Bde skyid tshe ring (b. 1984) was a well-known rap singer from Chu dmar leb (Qumalai) County, Yul shul (Yushu) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho ngon. See <https://bit.ly/3QBrN8j> 21 June 2022 for one of his performances.

I often went to his home to listen to him play the mandolin and sing.

## FLUTE

My maternal grandfather told me he saw a musical instrument (a local flute) for the first time in 1985. It belonged to his friend, Khyu lu (1943-2011), who bought it in Bla brang for two *yuan*. Khyu lu didn't sing, but he enjoyed playing a flute about sixty centimeters long and about one and a half centimeters in diameter with seven holes. There were few flutes at that time in the Mdo ba area.

Bsod nams bkra shis (1938-2018) described the *bod gling* 'Tibetan flute' and his experience in Mdo ba with the Tibetan flute and commented on the *rgya gling* 'Chinese flute' (Lhun 'grub et al. 2020:74-75). He also mentioned the *rkang gling* 'leg-flute' and *ding ru'i gling bu* 'vulture wing bone flute'.<sup>1</sup> I never saw a vulture wing bone flute and rarely saw Tibetan and Chinese flutes, indicative of their limited use in Mdo ba in 2022.

Tshe dpa' (b. 1973) described local *dmangs glu* singers playing the flute for about thirty seconds before they sang the first stanza, blowing it after the first stanza, and again after the second stanza if there were three stanzas.

Glu gar rgyal<sup>2</sup> (b. 1961), a well-known A mdo *dmangs glu* singer, sang Bod kha ba can gyi pha khu rnams 'Tibetan respectful elders' on Bod kyi dmangs glu 'gran sdur skabs gnyis pa'i bya dga'i gzengs skyes stsol ba'i dgong tshogs 'the award party of the Second Tibetan *Dmangs glu* Competition'.<sup>3</sup> He blew the flute for twenty-five seconds before singing the first stanza, then again for twenty-four seconds before the second stanza, and once more for twenty-two seconds before he sang the third stanza.

The flute was the local singers' instrument. Some liked to

<sup>1</sup> MaMing et al. (2020:20-30) described the vulture wing bone flute as relatively complex with five, six, and seven scales.

<sup>2</sup> Glu gar rgyal was interviewed by Rang grol rdo rje from Kha b'i zhabz rje 'footprint in the snow' channel of the A mdo TV Station <https://bit.ly/3CIyUHv> 5 October 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Glu gar rgyal's performance starts from 1'40" at <https://bit.ly/3Efblag> 5 October 2022).

play it but did not sing.

The only time I saw a local play a flute was in about 2005 when I accompanied one of my uncles to his friend's home. Uncle's friend, in his mid-thirties, discovered his old flute covered by dust in a wooden box outside his house, cleaned it, and demonstrated how to play it. He commented that he had played it very well in his twenties and added he played the flute before singing and again after singing the first *dmang glu* stanza.

Locals sing *dmangs glu* without instrumental accompaniment in most cases. The flute was the only musical instrument that occasionally accompanied local *dmangs glu*. For instance, the famous A mdo *dmangs glu* singer Gu ru's famous *dmangs glu Sga'i snga ri 'di la chags shig 'jog 'So Good...as the Pommel of this Saddle*<sup>1</sup> is accompanied only by a flute.

Today, some younger singers prefer electronic musical instruments to accompany their singing, e.g., Chos skyong skyabs, the grand champion of the Second A mdo *dmangs glu* Competition in 2019,<sup>2</sup> and local *dmangs glu* singer, Tshe dpal skybas.<sup>3</sup>

## MANDOLINS AND TIBETAN LUTES

Musical instruments have a very short local history. According to locals, the flute was the first musical instrument in Mdo ba in 1985. Mandolins and Tibetan lutes appeared around 2000. Only the mandolin and Tibetan lute were popular in Mdo ba in the first two decades of the twenty-first century.

The Tibetan lute was introduced in the local region from Mnga' ris (Ngari) in the eighteenth century. The second 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa<sup>4</sup> brought three musical instruments (Tibetan

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://bit.ly/3EkaJAb> 5 October 2022.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://bit.ly/3Uix86v> 24 September 2022.

<sup>3</sup> See <https://bit.ly/3UbXEOO> 24 September 2022.

<sup>4</sup> 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa (1648-1721) was the first of the 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa incarnation lineage. For more, see <https://bit.ly/3Dq3bLU> 14 September 2022.

lute, 'brong rwa'i sgra snyan 'wild-yak horn fiddle',<sup>1</sup> and flute)<sup>2</sup> when he returned from Lhasa to Bla brang Monastery<sup>3</sup> after completing studies in Dbus gtsang in 1702 (Yinzhu Sangmao 2019). The mandolin was also introduced to the A mdo area around about 1980 (Craun 2011). Local Mdo ba *rdung len* singer Sha bo bkra shis (b. 1977) said he bought a mandolin in 1999 and, before that, he hadn't seen a mandolin in Mdo ba. In 2005, he bought a Tibetan lute from a musical instrument store in Bla brang for 1,500 *yuan* and said he was the first in Mdo ba to buy a Tibetan lute.

Today, local *rdung len* singers use mandolins, Tibetan lutes, and other modern music and electronic instruments. For instance, a well-known local singer, 'Bum mtsho skyid (b. 1990), used a mandolin and drum set in her famous song, *Gnas 'gro bu mo*,<sup>4</sup> in 2020.

## INVESTIGATION

In 2022, Chinese, English, and Tibetan modern music were more popular than local traditional songs in Mdo ba. To further study this declining interest, I asked some locals in Mdo ba and my students

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<sup>1</sup> 'Brong rwa'i sgra snyan is a Tibetan traditional music instrument ('brong rwa 'wild yak horn', sgra snyan 'pleasant sound' made from wild yak horn, sheep skin, horsetail string, and wood). Find an audio and short video featuring 'brong rwa'i sgra snyan at <https://bit.ly/3xmBWht> 14 September 2022.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://bit.ly/3RKniJ1> 14 September 2022 for a performance featuring Ngari sgra snyan, 'brong rwa'i sgra snyan, and gling bu played together during the Mtsho sngon Radio and Television Station Tibetan Broadcasting 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Party in 2012. Instrument players were Mkhyen 'grub (flute), Tshe ring dbang 'dus ('brong rwa'i sgra snyan), Dga' ldan (mnga' ris sgra snyan), Rdo red (mnga' ris sgra snyan), and Pad ma bsam 'grub ('brong rwa'i sgra snyan).

<sup>3</sup> Bla brang Monastery (Labrang Monastery, Bla brang bkra shis 'khyil, Dge ldan bshad sgrub dar rgyas bkra shis gyas su 'khyil ba'i gling) located in Bsang chu County, Kan lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Kan su'u Province, was founded by 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo tje ngag dbang brtson 'grus (1648-1721) in 1709 (Dbal mang paN Di ta 1987).

<sup>4</sup> See <https://bit.ly/3DugQl4> 24 September 2022.

in Sder nang:<sup>1</sup> "What kind of songs do you enjoy listening to? Why?"

When I was an English teacher at Sder nang Primary School in June 2022, I planned to ask some locals in person about local *dmangs glu*. Unfortunately, circumstances changed, so I also used WeChat to interview two groups from Mdo ba. Four people born between 1980-1961 were in the first group, and five (I met three in person) born between 1992-2002 were in the second group. All were male.

The first group's common reply was that they appreciated *dmangs glu* because they had grown up with such songs and felt good when they heard them, especially when the performer had a good voice. *Dmangs glu* invoked nostalgia for gatherings and weddings, and two added that they could not understand Tibetan modern song lyrics.

Group Two (I sent a WeChat audio message to two who replied with audio messages) had very different responses. One said he liked both *dmangs glu* and modern songs, each with its own characteristics, so it was hard to say which he preferred. The other four said they often listened to modern songs rather than local traditional *dmangs glu* because modern songs better captured their thoughts, and the lyrics were about modern life.

In addition, I surveyed my students at the school. As mentioned, I was teaching English. My students were from the local pastoral area in grades four, five, and six. I took the opportunity to ask them in class, "Khyod rang dmangs glu la dga' 'am deng rabs glu dbyangs la dga' rgyu mtshan ci 'Do you prefer *dmangs glu* (DG) or modern songs (MS)? Why?'"

Forty-eight students were in Grade Four (fifteen boys and thirty-three girls). The oldest was thirteen, and the youngest was ten. Of the forty-eight, only two indicated they preferred *dmangs glu* to modern songs.

Of the fifty students in Grade Five (sixteen boys and thirty-four girls; the youngest was ten and the oldest was fifteen), none

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<sup>1</sup> Sder nang Township, Dar lag County, Mgo log Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon.

preferred *dmangs glu*, while of the thirty-five students in Grade Six (eleven boys and twenty-four girls; the oldest was twenty and the youngest was twelve), four liked *dmangs glu*, while the others preferred modern songs.

Primary Grades 2-6 song preferences.

Grade	Total # Students	Oldest/ Youngest	(Boys)/ (Girls)	Like DG/MS
4	48	14-10	15 boys, 33 girls	2 DG/46 MS
5	50	15-10	16 boys, 34 girls	0 DG/50 MS
6	35	20-12	11 boys, 24 girls	4 DG/31MS

I randomly chose five students from each grade (in class) and asked them to explain their choice. Students who chose modern songs typically said *dmangs glu* lyrics were challenging to understand because of the metaphors. They added they didn't know how to appreciate local *dmangs glu* with its low pitch and few lyrics that last for several long seconds. In contrast, they said, modern songs had lyrics much easier to understand, the lyrics were "close to our world," and the musical instruments and MVs were more attractive.

The six students who said they preferred local *dmangs glu* did not provide specific reasons.

## SGROL MA SKYABS

### LIFE

On 5-27 February and 7 March 2022, I interviewed Sgrol ma skyabs about his life and singing experiences. Sgrol ma skyabs (b 1978), a herdsman, grew up with livestock, and in 2022, he continues to herd yaks and sheep throughout the year. He was well-known locally as a Tibetan traditional *dmangs glu* singer and was particularly appreciated for his antiphonal singing at weddings. In 2022 he sang *dmangs glu* traditional songs at *bag ston* 'local weddings', *khang ston* 'new house celebrations', and *gya ston* 'eighty-year-old celebrations'. His life experiences and his family



background vividly characterize a traditional local family.

I describe Sgrol ma skyabs' family background, including his parents, younger brother, and younger sister; life experiences, including his childhood, schooling, herding life, his family responsibilities, worries about his ill father and his two unschooled sons, and his experiences of singing local *dmangs glu*. I also give four of Sgrol ma skyabs' songs as performed; a literary, poetic text in Tibetan script and Wylie; and an English translation.

During my interviews with Sgrol ma skyabs at his winter pasture home and via WeChat, I recorded our conversations on my phone and laptop, took notes, listened again, and translated and edited the following account:

My name is Sgrol ma skyabs. I am from the Ra rgan 'Tsho ba 'Clan',<sup>1</sup> Yo lag Village, Mdo ba Town. There are sixty-four households and about 250 residents in our brigade. It is a herding area where we herd sheep, yaks, and horses.

My parents have two sons and a daughter. My sister, Mkha' 'gro mtsho (b. 1984), never attended school. She married a man from our clan when she was about eighteen. They divorced about six months later. When she was about twenty, she married again and moved to her husband's home in the Ldong nges Clan, where she lives today. She has a son and a daughter. Both attend school.

My younger brother, Rdo rje rab brtan (b. 1986), is an illiterate herdsman who attended the local primary school for about ten days, left, and never returned. We lived with our parents until he married. My father then divided us into two families.

My mother, Mtsho mo (b. 1961), lives with Rdo rje rab brtan, his wife Lha mo (b. 1989), and their children. One child attends the local primary school, a second son born in 2019 died three months after birth, and a third son was born in 2021.

I live with my father, my wife (Sgrol ma, b. 1982), and our three children.

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<sup>1</sup> Sgrol ma skyabs used the term *'tsho ba 'clan'*. Local officials use *ru khag* and *dui* 'brigade' in Tibetan and Chinese, respectively. Both terms appear on Mdo ba residents' ID cards. Yo lag Village is home to the Ra rgan, Bon po, Bla brang ma, 'Ja' mo, Rin kho, Blon chen, and Dpon skor clans. In Chinese, these terms are referred to as Yi ('One'), Er ('Two'), San ('Three'), Si ('Four'), Wu ('Five'), Liu ('Six'), and Qi ('Seven') brigades, respectively.

My father is an illiterate good herder. He cared for our livestock until I could herd well. He is also a Tibetan chess expert. Unfortunately, he has been seriously ill since 2020. In about 2011, a small tumor appeared on the roof of his mouth. He ignored it until it was very painful. The doctors said it was too late to treat when we went to the Number One Hospital (Di yi renming yiyuan) in Zi ling (Xining) City in 2020. A local bla ma suggested we go to the Kan su'u (Gansu) Provincial Tumor Hospital, where Father was hospitalized for several months, but he didn't improve. Today, he frequently takes painkillers and spends most of his time in bed. Mother tends him in the Mdo ba Town Center in Rdo rje rab brtan's house. I cannot always be with him because I must care for our livestock in the winter and summer pastures. Father's illness brings a lot of pressure and makes me unhappy.

My illiterate wife never attended school. We married in 1999 and now have two sons and a daughter. My wife is a hard worker and spends nearly all her time at home. She cooks for our family, tethers yaks in the evening, collects yak dung, and milks our yaks every morning.

Sangs rgyas (b. 2001) is my oldest son. When he was a child, there was a small hump on his right shoulder. Today, his scoliosis is more severe. He graduated from junior high school last year, but after failing the senior high school entrance examination, he stopped attending. I constantly worry about his future. He can't work very well, and it will be difficult for him to find a partner. I have suggested he become a monk, which he is willing to do. Unfortunately, Mdo sngags dar rgyas gling<sup>1</sup> and Reb gong dar zhing bde 'dzoms dga' tshal gling<sup>2</sup> didn't accept him because of his scoliosis. He stays at home with nothing to do. I worry about this.

Tshe ring (b. 2007), my second son, graduated from the local primary school last year, attended junior high school in Thun rin City for a semester, and then stopped schooling. He is often in the Town Center with his friends and doesn't come to our home in the herding area. I worry about his future. I have no idea how he will make a better life for himself. He hated school and also doesn't like herding

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<sup>1</sup> Founded by Dge 'dun rgya mtsho in 1956, Mdo sngags dar rgyas gling is southwest of the Mdo ba Town Center. Skal bzang bstan 'dzin (A khu sman tog) and Brtson 'grus rgya mtso reopened the monastery after the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976; Reb gong pa 'jigs med bsam grub 2013:528-533).

<sup>2</sup> Dar zhing bde 'dzoms dga' tshal gling Monastery is in Mgar rtse (Guashize) Village, Chu khog (Qukuhu) Township, Reb gong City. It was founded by G.yu rngog bsam gtan rgya mtsho and sponsored by Bde chen bya btang kun dga' chos 'phels in 1666 (Reb gong pa 'jigs med bsam grub 2013:539-543).

our livestock.

My daughter, Lha mo (b. 2003), is a senior high school student. She does well in study, and I will support her as much as possible. She doesn't like herding livestock, but she is a good student, and I hope she has a bright future with a good job. I'm happy about that.

I am now the head of our family. Father gave me his position a few years after I married. He wasn't much concerned about our family when I was old enough to take care of our family. He walked to town to play chess with his friends almost daily until we got a house in the Mdo ba Town Center.

Our life depends on herding yaks and sheep. Today, I have 173 sheep and sixty-three yaks. As I mentioned, there are six people in my family. I have three *myi skal*<sup>1</sup> of winter pasture and four *myi skal* in the summer pasture. My children weren't born when our land was divided, so they were not assigned grassland in winter and summer pastures, except for my oldest son, who has a *myi skal* in the summer grassland.

I'll now tell you about my life experiences and how I learned traditional songs. I was responsible as a child for helping Father care for our sheep. In about 1989, when I was eleven years old, local government officers and local teachers collected students from each village by lottery to attend school. Nobody wanted to send their children to school at that time. Everybody was hoping that they wouldn't be selected by lottery.

The lottery selected me in 1989. My family would have to pay 400 RMB if I did not attend school, so I attended that year. Teacher Lcags byams, a farmer from somewhere in Reb gong, was my headteacher. Tibetan and math were our only subjects. I initially took every class seriously because I was afraid of the

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<sup>1</sup> The *myi skal* (*myi* 'person', *skal* 'sharing') is a variable local grassland measure. Local leaders divided grassland among families in 1994. Age and gender were treated the same during division. Each person received one *myi skal* of winter pasture, so a family of five received five *myi skal* of winter pasture. In this circumstance, one *myi skal* was about 100 *mu*/6.67 hectares/247.10 acres (this information is from a noticeboard in the Chinese language in the government offices courtyard in the Town Center in 2020). Meanwhile, forty percent of grassland remained for summer pasture. Each person was assigned one *myi skal*. In this case, *myi skal* size depended on summer grassland quality. What was considered good grassland was divided into smaller *myi skal* units while poor quality *myi skal* grazing units (e.g., rocky mountains and forests) were larger.

teachers. I studied well, but later I was very homesick and often escaped [the boarding] school.

When I was in Grade Three, my study results were no longer very good because I had missed many classes and wasn't focusing on studying. I didn't want to stay in school anymore. Today, I fully regret that choice. Whenever Lcags byams came to my home and asked me to return to school, I would, but I soon escaped again. I would be a teacher now if I had stayed in school. I vividly remember Lcags byams coming to my home and promising my family and me that he would help me become a local teacher if I continued schooling and graduated from the local primary school. Unfortunately, I stopped schooling, and my family paid the 400 RMB fine.

I didn't know how to consider my future at that time. Most of us didn't understand the value of schooling. I could have been a good model for my children today and help with their studies if I had been a teacher. Instead, I cannot help my children very much in their studies. My sons have stopped schooling. My younger son particularly doesn't like school and studying. Now I suppose I am not good enough to educate them well, and I also don't know how to educate them well.

As I mentioned, I grew up in a herding area on the Plateau, and my home area is relatively underdeveloped. When I was a child, there was no TV, no radio, and very few books besides holy books that we didn't open. Listening to folktales and playing with herdmates was much of my childhood. My brother and sister took turns telling folktales almost every night after dinner. I could retell about thirty folktales completely and with a lot of emotion when I was a child. But now I've almost forgotten them all. I was also interested in local dmangs glu when I was about fifteen. My mother has a good voice and was asked to sing local traditional dmangs glu when she attended local gatherings and during special times such as Lo sar. Some suggested I had inherited my mother's good voice, so relatives and locals often asked me to sing. This gave me the idea that I had a good voice like my mother.

As locals continued encouraging me to sing local dmangs glu, I began to pay attention to local singers and secretly practiced singing by myself after hearing local singers. Afterward, I rarely missed attending local gatherings and weddings because I wanted to hear the singing. Still, being a good singer requires more than having a good voice and knowing many songs. It is important to sing appropriate songs at the right time, and the manner of singing is also important.

Your body position, body movement, and gestures are critical to being a great public singer because they show sophistication. Local singers sang in two

places when I was a child. The most popular was at local weddings where local singers sang when a bride or groom arrived at the home of their groom or bride. On these occasions, the singers should sit cross-legged with their upper body bent a bit forward while slightly inclined to their right with the right elbow against the right knee and the right hand against their right cheek. The left hand is placed on the left knee, and the elbow is raised so the left arm resembles a bow. These positions can be reversed depending on the singer's choice.

Other local gatherings included monastery feasts, the local Bzhi ba'i smyung gnas 'Fasting of the Fourth Month' gathering, and horse races. Singers sang while standing and usually held a kha btags at such gatherings. Sometimes the singer held the kha btags in his right hand with his left hand against his left cheek while slowly and rhythmically walking step by step. I carefully observed these body positions and movements and often practiced when I was herding sheep in the mountains.

I also listened to many local singers, often memorized what I considered good lyrics, and practiced the songs myself when I was in the mountains. I also changed some of the lyrics to improve them.

I also considered responses while singing antiphonally. There are many local songs such as glu shags 'humorous songs'.<sup>1</sup> Dri glu ask questions, challenging the opponent, who is considered the loser if they cannot reply. Bstod glu are sung at weddings, new house parties, and during Lo sar. Ja glu and bcol glu are only sung at weddings. Ja glu asks for a meal when the bride's or groom's entourage arrives at the home where the wedding is held. Bcol glu tells the bride's or groom's side to kindly treat the new family member [groom or bride].

Song melodies must be learned well. Not doing so is to run the risk of mixing a love song melody with a non-love song melody, which is very shameful because local romantic relationships are forbidden in public places where relatives gather. I use *ldong la re* and *lo yang lo*<sup>2</sup> most frequently because they suit my voice and are easy to sing.

After practicing alone in the mountains hundreds of times, I thought I could sing well. I carefully listened to the songs when I attended weddings and

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<sup>1</sup> Lhun 'grub et al. (2020:49) provide "...songs that featured joking and teasing content to entertain and make everyone laugh" and use "*glu shags*." Locals use *shags glu* and *glu shags* interchangeably.

<sup>2</sup> *Ldong la re* and *lo yang lo* were local *dmangs glu* melodies common in my home community. *Ldong la re* were vocally demanding. *Lo yang lo* were much easier to sing with a faster rhythm than *ldong la re*.

mentally replied to them, hoping someone would ask me to sing. Unfortunately, I didn't hear such encouragement for several years.

I sang a traditional local song at a [Mdo sngags dar rgyas gling] Monastery celebration when I was seventeen. Locals believed I could sing local songs well because my mother had a good voice, and a local elder encouraged me to sing. I felt pleasure and fear at that moment. I was happy because I dreamed of singing at such a gathering, and I was afraid because I had never sung in public.

There were about 200 people at that celebration. I had to stand when someone gave me a kha btags. My legs trembled like a flag in the wind. I went to the middle of the gathering and assumed a posture I had practiced on the mountain. My left hand touched my left cheek, and my right hand held a kha btags that I slowly raised and lowered. I couldn't see the people there or hear my voice because I was so nervous. I can't remember the melody I used then, but I remember the lyrics.

## SONGS

### SONG ONE

Sgrol ma skyabs vividly remembers the song below. The lyrics are from his first public performance when he was seventeen. This song is particularly suitable for religious ceremonies or gatherings and very suitable when praising certain areas. The second stanza mentions a Reb gong *bla ma* and a Reb gong location and is only sung in the Reb gong area. Also, the first stanza mentions a certain place. The first stanza is usually a metaphor.

#### Song Text as Performed

<sup>1</sup>ser gyi le nyi rtse brgyab 'dra bo  
<sup>2</sup>chags zhog ra dbus gtsang dog gis zhing red  
<sup>3</sup>gan jo ma ga brgyad gi gdan sa red la  
<sup>4</sup>'di ban ser mos grub mtha' rtsod sa red gras  
<sup>5</sup>zhaw hud la phyag gsum gan na tsha wo  
<sup>6</sup>ga ha na mgon skyabs mdzad ni med

glu bar mo bar nas gnang nga byin ko

<sup>1</sup>ser gyi le mar bsku khyil 'dra bo  
<sup>2</sup>chags zhog ra reb gong gser mo ljongs red  
<sup>3</sup>gan shar skal ldan rgya mtsho'i gdan sa red gras  
<sup>4</sup>gsum ma Ni yig drug gsung sa red gras  
<sup>5</sup>'u chos zhaw hud la phyag gsum ga na tsha wo  
<sup>6</sup>ga han na mgon skyabs mdzad ni med go

ngas glu shes ni min ra rtem 'brel red gras

<sup>1</sup>སེར་གྱི་ལེ་ཉི་ཅེ་བརྒྱབ་འདྲ་བོ།  
<sup>2</sup>ཆགས་ཞོག་ར་དབུས་གཙང་དོག་གིས་ཞིང་རེད།  
<sup>3</sup>གན་ཚོ་མ་ག་བརྒྱད་གི་གདན་ས་རེད་ལ།  
<sup>4</sup>འདི་བན་སེར་མོས་བྲུབ་མཐའ་ཚོད་ས་རེད་གས།  
<sup>5</sup>ཞུ་དུང་ལ་བྱུག་གསུམ་གན་ན་ཆ་མོ།  
<sup>6</sup>ག་ཏན་ན་མགོན་རྒྱབས་མཛད་ནི་མེད།  
 སྤུ་བར་མོ་བར་ནས་གནང་བ་བྱིན་གོ  
<sup>1</sup>སེར་གྱི་ལེ་མར་བསྐྱུ་བྱིལ་འདྲ་བོ།  
<sup>2</sup>ཆགས་ཞོག་ར་རེབ་གོང་གསེར་མོ་ཚྭ་ས་རེད།  
<sup>3</sup>གན་ཤར་སྐལ་ལྷན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གདན་ས་རེད་གས།  
<sup>4</sup>གསུམ་མ་ཉི་ཡིག་བྲུག་གསུང་ས་རེད་གས།  
<sup>5</sup>འུ་ཚོས་ཞུ་དུང་ལ་བྱུག་གསུམ་གན་ན་ཆ་མོ།  
<sup>6</sup>ག་ཏན་ན་མགོན་རྒྱབས་མཛད་ནི་མེད་གོ།  
 ངས་སྤུ་ཤེས་ནི་མེན་ར་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་རེད་གས།

## Literary Poetic Text

<sup>1</sup>ser lam me nyi rtse brgyabs 'dra bo  
<sup>2</sup>chags bzhag na dbus gtsang dag pa'i zhing  
<sup>3</sup>jo ma ga brgyad kyi gdan sa red  
<sup>4</sup>ban ser mo'i grub mtha' rtsod sa red  
<sup>5</sup>zhaw phud nas phyag gsum gan na 'tshal  
<sup>6</sup>gan yan gi mgon skyabs mdzad ni med

glu bar mo bar nas gnang ba byin

<sup>1</sup>ser gyi le mar khu 'khyil 'dra bo  
<sup>2</sup>chags bzhag na reb gong gser mo ljongs  
<sup>3</sup>shar skal ldan rgya mtsho'i gdan sa red  
<sup>4</sup>gsung ma Ni yig drug gsung sa red  
<sup>5</sup>zhaw phud la phyag gsum gan na 'tshal  
<sup>6</sup>gan phan gi mgon skyabs gnang ni med

glu shes mi min 'dra rten 'brel red

<sup>1</sup>སེར་ལམ་མེ་ཉི་མེ་བརྒྱབས་འདྲ་བོ།  
<sup>2</sup>ཆགས་བཞག་ན་དབུས་གཙང་དག་པའི་ཞིང་།  
<sup>3</sup>ཤ་མ་ག་བརྒྱུད་ཀྱི་གདན་ས་རེད།  
<sup>4</sup>བན་སེར་མོས་བྱུང་མཐའ་ཚུད་ས་རེད།  
<sup>5</sup>ཞུ་ཕུང་ནས་ཕྱག་གསུམ་གན་ན་འཚལ།  
<sup>6</sup>གན་ཡན་གི་མགོན་སྐྱབས་གནང་ནི་མེད།  
 སྐྱ་བར་མོ་བར་ནས་གནང་བ་བྱིན།

<sup>1</sup>སེར་གྱི་ལེ་མར་ཁུ་འབྱེལ་འདྲ་བོ།  
<sup>2</sup>ཆགས་བཞག་ན་རེབ་གོང་གསེར་མོ་སྦྲངས།  
<sup>3</sup>ཤར་སྐལ་ཐུན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གདན་ས་རེད།  
<sup>4</sup>གསུང་མ་ཉི་ཡིག་དྲུག་གསུང་ས་རེད།  
<sup>5</sup>ཞུ་ཕུང་ལ་ཕྱག་གསུམ་གན་ན་འཚལ།  
<sup>6</sup>གན་ཡན་གི་མགོན་སྐྱབས་གནང་ནི་མེད།  
 སྐྱ་ཤེས་ནི་མེན་འདྲ་ཉིན་འབྲེལ་རེད།

## Translation

<sup>1</sup>As gold as dawn's glow  
<sup>2</sup>Tibet's Dbus gtsang  
<sup>3</sup>The site of the eight holiest Buddha images  
<sup>4</sup>Where sacred monks debate philosophical questions  
<sup>5</sup>Remove your hat and pay homage  
<sup>6</sup>There is no better blessing

Forgive me for skipping the middle stanza



<sup>1</sup>As gold as melted butter

<sup>2</sup>Is the region of Reb gong

<sup>3</sup>The birthplace of His Holiness, Shar skal ldan rgya mtsho<sup>1</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Where sacred *ma Ni* are chanted

<sup>5</sup>Remove your hat and pay homage

<sup>6</sup>There is no better blessing

I don't sing to impress but for auspiciousness.

## SONG TWO

This song is performed at weddings from the groom's side to the bride's side when the singing begins at the wedding.

Song Text as Performed

'o ye ye ye ya re la mo ngas glu zig len 'go 'o

<sup>1</sup>khyod a zhang gzo rma bya yang sngon mo re la

<sup>2</sup>nga gnyen tshang sang chu 'brug ljang khya re la

<sup>3</sup>'u kha gnyis ga rma 'brug yang kha sprod re la

<sup>4</sup>'dis rtags rte 'brel gi dang ngo yang 'di nas 'grig ga gzas

<sup>1</sup>'o khyod a zhang tshang seng ge yang dkar mo re la

<sup>2</sup>nga gnyen tshang sang rgya stag yang dmar ro re la

<sup>3</sup>'u kha nyis ka stag seng yang kha sprod re la

<sup>4</sup>rtags rte 'brel gi nyis ba yang 'di nas 'grig ga gzas

<sup>1</sup>'e khyod a zhang tshang 'do rigs yang rta bo re la

<sup>2</sup>'o snyan tshang sang rlung nag yang 'tshub ma re la

<sup>3</sup>'u kha nyis ka rlung rta yang sde bzhi re la

<sup>4</sup>rtags rte 'brel gyi gsum pa yang 'di nas 'grig ga

ngas glu shes no gzo min 'dra dga' ni yin

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<sup>1</sup> Shar skal ldan rgya mtsho (1607-1677) was the first of the Rong bo grub chen or Shar skal ldan rgyal mtsho incarnation lineage. His reincarnations were the head *bla ma* of Reb gong Monastery (for more, see <https://bit.ly/3QFndFp> 13 August 2022).

<sup>1</sup>ཁྱེད་ཨ་ཁེང་གཞི་མ་བྱ་ཡང་སྤྱོད་མོ་རེ་ལ།

<sup>2</sup>ང་ག་ཉེན་ཚང་སང་ཚུ་འབྲུག་ལྗང་ཁྱ་རེ་ལ།

<sup>3</sup> བྱ་ཁ་གཉིས་ག་མ་འབྲུག་ཡང་ཁ་སྒྲོད་རེ་ལ།

<sup>4</sup>འདིས་རྟགས་ཏེ་འབྲེལ་གི་དང་ངོ་ཡང་འདི་ནས་འབྲིག་ག་གཟས།

<sup>1</sup>འོ་ཁྱོད་ཨ་ཞང་ཆང་སང་གེ་ཡང་དཀར་མོ་རེ་ལ།

<sup>2</sup>ང་གཉིས་ཆང་སང་གྱུ་རྒྱལ་ཡང་དམར་རོ་རེ་ལ།

3 བྱ་ཁ་ཉིས་ཀ་སྟག་སེང་ཡང་ཁ་སྒྲོང་རེ་ལ།

<sup>4</sup>རྟགས་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་གི་ཉིས་བ་ཡང་འདྲི་ནས་འབྲིག་ག་གཟས།

<sup>1</sup>འེ་བྱོད་ཨ་ཞང་ཆང་འདྲོ་རིགས་ཡང་རྟ་བོ་རེ་ལ།

<sup>2</sup>འོ་སྒྲིབ་ཚང་སང་རྒྱང་ནག་ཡང་འཕྲོབ་མ་རེ་ལ།

3 ལྟ་ཁ་ཉིས་ཀ་རྒྱང་རྟ་ཡང་སྡེ་བཞི་རེ་ལ།

<sup>4</sup>རྟགས་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་གྱི་གསུམ་པ་ཡང་འདི་ནས་འབྲིག་ག།

ངས་སྤྱི་ཤེས་ལོ་གསེལ་མཉན་འདྲ་དགའ་ནི་ཡིན།

1khyod a zhang rma bya sngon mo red  
 2nga gnyen tshang chu 'brug ljang khra red  
 3'u kha gnyis rma 'brug kha sprod red  
 4rtags rten 'brel gyi dang po 'di nas 'grig

1khyod a zhang seng ge dkar mo red  
2nga gnyen tshang rgya stag dmar po red  
3'u kha gnyis stag seng kha sprod red  
4rtags rten 'brel gyi gnyis pa 'di nas 'grig

<sup>1</sup>kh-yod a zhang 'do rigs rta pho red  
<sup>2</sup>nga gnyen tshang rlung nag 'tshub ma red  
<sup>3</sup>u kha gnyis rlung rta sde bzhi red  
<sup>4</sup>rtags rten 'brel gyi gsum pa 'di nas 'grig

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<sup>2</sup>ང་གཉེན་ཚང་ཚུ་འབྲུག་ལྗང་ཁ་རེད།

3 ལྟ་ཁ་གཉིས་མ་འབྲུག་ཁ་སྒྲོང་རེད།

<sup>4</sup>རྟགས་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་གྱི་དང་པོ་འདི་ནས་འགྲིག།

<sup>1</sup> ཁྱེད་ཨ་ཁང་སེང་གེ་དཀར་མོ་རེད།

<sup>2</sup>ང་གཉེན་ཚང་གྱུ་སྟག་དམར་པོ་རེད།

3 འུ་ཁ་གཉིས་སྟག་སང་ཁ་སྟོང་རེད།

<sup>4</sup>རྟགས་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་གྱི་གཉིས་པ་འདི་ནས་འགྲིག་

<sup>1</sup>ཁྱེད་ཨ་ཁང་འདྲི་རིགས་ཏུ་ཕོ་རེད།

²ང་གཉེན་ཚང་སྤྱང་ནག་འཕྲོ་བ་མ་རེད།

3 ལྟ་ཁ་གཉིས་རྒྱུད་ཏྟ་ཕྱེ་བཞི་རེད།

<sup>4</sup>རྟགས་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་གྱི་གསུམ་པ་འདི་ནས་འགྲིག་

ངས་སྤྱི་ཤེས་ནི་མིན་ར་དགའ་ནི་ཡིན།

<sup>1</sup>You, the bride's family, are the blue-peacock

<sup>2</sup>I, the groom's family, am the greenish-white aquatic dragon.

<sup>3</sup>We, two families are the paired peacock and dragon

<sup>4</sup>The initial auspicious omen is indicated here

<sup>1</sup>You, the bride's family, are the white-lion

<sup>2</sup>I, the groom's family, am the red-tiger

<sup>3</sup>We, two families are the paired lion and tiger

<sup>4</sup>The second auspicious omen is indicated here

<sup>1</sup>You, the bride's family, are the stallion

<sup>2</sup>I, the groom's family, am a black-tempest

<sup>3</sup>We, two families are *rlung rta sde bzhi*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>4</sup>The third auspicious omen is indicated here

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### Song Text as Performed

'o ye ye ye ye lo yang lo lo kho ya re ye len 'go

1'a ro 'di hrin kar nag gnyis gi lo yang lo lo kho kha mtshams ye na go  
2'a ro 'di dgong nyi mar drod khol lo yang lo lo kho 'dzoms mas yod ka  
3'a ro 'di drod rtags gas bsdad na lo yang lo lo kho skyid zig ye red la  
4'a ro 'di skyid rtags gas 'dug nus lo yang lo lo kho smor lam gzo  
'debs

1'a ro 'di lo brgyad cu dgu bcu'i lo yang lo lo kho yang kha mtshams  
ye na go  
2'u gzo'i pha a khu'i tshe dag lo yang lo lo kho ring ngas yo ga  
3'a ro 'di'i tshe ring ngas bsdad na lo yang lo lo kho skyid tsig gzo re la  
4'a ro ngas skyid rtags gas 'dug nus lo yang lo lo kho smor lam gzo  
'debs ba

[illegible]

1 འ་རོ་འདི་ལོ་བརྒྱད་ཅུ་དགུ་བཅུདི་ལོ་ཡང་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ཡང་ཁ་མཚམས་ལེན་གོ།  
2 བྱ་གཞིད་པ་ཨ་ཁུདི་ཆེད་གལ་ལོ་ཡང་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་རེད་ངས་ཡོ་ག།  
3 འ་རོ་འདིདི་ཆེ་རེད་ངས་བསྐྱད་ན་ལོ་ཡང་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ཞིད་ཅིག་གཞོ་རེ་ལ།

<sup>1</sup>sprin dkar nag gnyis kyi kha mtshams na  
<sup>2</sup>dgong nyi mar drod khol 'dzoms nas yod  
<sup>3</sup>drod rtag nas bsdad na skyid zhig red  
<sup>4</sup>skyid rtag nas 'dug pa'i smon lam 'debs  
<sup>1</sup>lo brgyad cu dgu bcu'i kha mtshams na  
<sup>2</sup>pha a kha'i tshe thag ring nas yod  
<sup>3</sup>tshe ring nas bsdad na skyid zhig red  
<sup>4</sup>skyid rtag nas 'dug pa'i smon lam 'debs

1 རྩུབ་དཀར་ཅག་གཉིས་ཀྱི་ཁ་མཆམས་ན།  
 2 དགོང་ཉི་མར་རྩོད་ཁོལ་འཛོམས་ནས་ཡོད།  
 3 རྩོད་རྒྱ་ནས་བཟང་ན་སྦྱིད་ཅིག་རེད།  
 4 རྩོད་རྒྱ་ནས་འདྲག་པའི་སྦྱོར་ལམ་འདྲབས།

1མ་བརྒྱད་ཅུ་དགུ་བརྒྱའི་ཁ་མཆམས་ན།  
2པ་མ་ཁྱའི་ཆོ་མཁུ་རིང་ནས་ཡོད།  
3ཆོ་རིང་ནས་བརྒྱད་ན་རྒྱུད་ཅིག་རེད།  
4རྒྱུད་རྟག་ནས་འདྲག་པའི་སྒྲིམ་ལམ་འདྲེབས།

<sup>1</sup>At the conjunction of the black and white clouds  
<sup>2</sup>The sun is warm  
<sup>3</sup>It's a pleasure to keep the warmth  
<sup>4</sup>I wish to keep such pleasure forever

- <sup>1</sup>At the age of eighty to ninety
- <sup>2</sup>Elders enjoy long lives
- <sup>3</sup>It's a pleasure to live a long life
- <sup>4</sup>I wish such pleasure is kept for a long time

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<sup>1</sup>ངས་བྱིམ་ཚང་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་རི་བསྟོད།

<sup>2</sup>རྒྱལ་རི་རྒྱལ་ཐིང་ལྷ་བདུན་རེད།

<sup>3</sup>མ་མཁུ་དར་བའི་ཉེན་འབྲེལ་རེད།

<sup>1</sup>ངས་བྱིམ་ཚང་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་མདུན་རི་བསྟོད།

<sup>2</sup>མདུན་རི་རྒྱ་མིག་རང་འབྲེལ་རེད།

<sup>3</sup>མ་སྐྱ་མ་དར་བའི་ཉེན་འབྲེལ་རེད།

ངས་སྐྱ་མེས་ནི་མིན་ར་ཉེན་འབྲེལ་ཡིན།

## Translation

<sup>1</sup>I will praise your home's back-mountain

<sup>2</sup>The back mountain is Rgyal srid sna bdun<sup>1</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Symbolizing elders will flourish

<sup>1</sup>I will praise your home's front-mountain

<sup>2</sup>The front mountain is a coiling spring

<sup>3</sup>Symbolizing elder females will flourish

I don't sing to impress but for good wishes

I learned the first song from an old local singer who sang it at a local gathering. When you asked me about the most unforgettable song I had ever heard, I immediately thought of this song and the time and scene when I first sang publicly in front of many local people. Afterward, I often sang at weddings and other gatherings. I no longer hoped someone would ask me to sing. Locals frequently invited me to weddings and other gatherings when I was about twenty, and I was expected to sing in most cases. I was admired and respected. I felt good about that.

I specialized in response during antiphonal singing. I once

<sup>1</sup> Rgyal srid sna bdun 'seven royal possessions' are *'khor lo rin po che* 'the precious wheel', *nor bu rin po che* 'the precious jewel', *btsun mo rin po che* 'the precious queen', *blon po rin po che* 'the precious minister' *glang po rin po che*, 'the precious elephant' *rta mchog rin po che*, 'the precious horse', and *dmag dpon rin po che* 'the precious general'.

thought I might stop the other side's singers immediately. Sometimes when the other side's singer sang a local *dmangs glu*, a response automatically came to me [of something I'd heard before], and I sang it immediately. I could also create new appropriate replies. I never worried about being unable to respond to songs.

When I attended my cousin's (Rta mgrin tshe lo) second wedding to his current wife from Sgro rong bo, one of the bride's side singers sang a *bcog glu*. A song immediately came to my mind that challenged this song. No one could respond after I sang it.

When I was about thirty-five, I started to lose interest in singing because I had lost self-confidence. My voice had degenerated, I forgot songs, and I am not good-looking. I didn't want to see and hear myself on smartphones and online. I now avoid local weddings and gatherings.

I admire singers from Sog po<sup>1</sup> and Mgo log because of their amazing voices and meaningful songs.

Many local people think the singers from Sgro rong bo are great, but I disagree. I cannot now find a good singer from our home area.

*Dmangs glu* was traditionally a way of communicating with others and required the ability to choose appropriate songs for the time and context. Singers were judged on the quality of their voice, the number of songs they knew, the meaning of the songs, and their gestures. This has changed with today's audiences only considering voice quality.

## DMANGS GLU CONTINUATION-PRESERVATION

Since about 2010, the A mdo TV Station, local governments, and schools have held *dmangs glu* competitions, songfests, and activities in certain areas (Rma lho, Mtsho lho, Mtsho byang Tibetan autonomous prefectures) in Mtsho sngon Province to encourage, spread, and maintain A mdo Tibetan *dmangs glu*. For

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<sup>1</sup> Henan Mongolian Autonomous County, Rma lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon Province.



example, A mdo TV<sup>1</sup> held a *Tibetan Dmangs Glu Competition*<sup>2</sup> in 2015 and 2019:

This stage was created for many folk singers to restore and develop Tibetan *dmangs glu* and *dmangs glu* culture. The competition was held twice and played an unprecedented role in the inheritance and development of Tibetan *dmangs glu* and *dmangs glu* culture.<sup>3</sup> Awards were given after the 2019 activities during the Second Tibetan *Dmangs Glu* Competition Awards Party.

From 2019-2022, during the Lo sar Mtsho lho (Hainan)<sup>4</sup> Khul rgyang sgrog brnyan 'phrin khang 'The Mtsho lho Broadcasting and TV Station'<sup>5</sup> held the *Tibetan Dmangs Glu Performance Program*<sup>6</sup> four times. In the summer of 2018, Rtse khog (Zeku)<sup>7</sup> County held a *Tibetan Dmangs glu Competition*.<sup>8</sup> Mtsho nub (Haixi) Mongolian and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture held *Tibetan Dmangs Glu Competitions*<sup>9</sup> in 2015 and in 2018. Schools have also held such activities centered on maintaining Tibetan song culture. Khri ka<sup>10</sup> (Guide) County Nationality Boarding School held *Melody of The Ancestors*<sup>11</sup> *Dmangs Glu* Competitions in 2013 and 2015.

Locally, contemporary *dmangs glu* and *dmangs glu* culture advocates include Pad+ma (b. 1993), a local Mdo ba resident who collected and uploaded local *dmangs glu* videos on his WeChat

<sup>1</sup> A mdo TV is an A mdo Tibetan language TV channel  
<https://bit.ly/3OHdOfE> 1 August 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Gangs ljongs me lung official website <https://bit.ly/3l7iaQq>  
13 May 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Gangs ljongs me lug official website <https://bit.ly/3zkFfYk> 12 May 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Mtsho lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon Province.

<sup>5</sup> 'Hainan zhou guangbo dianshitai'.

<sup>6</sup> Mtsho sngon po website <https://bit.ly/3soSgLW> 12 May 2022.

<sup>7</sup> Rtse khog County, Rma lho Tibetan Automonous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon Province.

<sup>8</sup> Gangs ljongs me lug official website <https://bit.ly/39X7jGv> 12 May 2022.

<sup>9</sup> Gangs ljongs me lug official website <https://bit.ly/3lalyd7> 12 May 2022.

<sup>10</sup> Khri ka County, Mtsho lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon Province.

<sup>11</sup> Mtsho sngon Provincial Government website <https://bit.ly/3NewVwD>  
13 May 2022.

channel.<sup>1</sup>

## REFLECTIONS

Though I (Chos skyong skyabs) didn't know a complete local traditional song melody when I was a child, I frequently imitated local singers, singing and gesturing as I had heard others sing and gesture. Singing was part of our lives. No one can sing well in my family, but we were very fond of local *dmangs glu*. When guests came to our home during Lo sar, we asked them to sing *dmangs glu*, and most obliged. First, my mother or aunt offered a bowl of milk tea and a bowl of yogurt. When the guest finished the first bowl, my family offered another bowl. My mother and aunt did their best to host them. After the guests were full, we asked them to sing *dmangs glu*. My aunt energetically would say, "You can't leave if you don't sing a *dmangs glu* in our home!" Most visitors then sang.

My biggest worry was that someone would ask me to sing *dmangs glu* while I visited local families' homes during Lo sar. Locals believed singing on special days is auspicious.

My uncle's radio was a bit bigger than a book you could easily hold. I remember it vividly. He often extended the antenna to make the reception clearer with less static. I was surprised when I first listened and believed Uncle when he teased me, saying tiny people lived inside the radio.

Every evening there was one A mdo Tibetan language channel that ran for about three and a half hours from six-thirty to ten with news reports, weather forecasts, Ge sar epic stories, and entertainment programs. There was only an hour of news reports, weather forecasts, and Ge sar epic stories in the morning. My family was most interested in the weather forecasts and entertainment sections because only A mdo *dmangs glu* and *rdung len* songs were played. My maternal grandfather remained fond of Ge sar epic stories in 2022.

Before the internet and smartphone, *dmangs glu* activities were among the most enjoyable times in local life. However, around

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<sup>1</sup> Step 1: Add WeChat: WMAHASI. Step 2: Click Channel.

2010, electricity became available throughout nearly all of Mdo ba, including the winter pastures. Almost every family soon had a TV and watched *dmangs glu* entertainment during Lo sar, contributing to declining singing activities during Lo sar. Especially in recent years, locals commonly use smartphones and social media. Since 2010, *dmangs glu* activities were no longer held during Lo sar, although *dmangs glu* were still performed at local weddings in 2022.

Most younger locals are losing interest in local traditional songs. The internet was available in the early twenty-first century throughout Mdo ba, with most people having a mobile phone and thus able to access countless songs online. Modern songs from a multitude of cultures have attracted their attention. In addition, local children began attending school when they were around five. I, for example, was never taught local traditional songs during school music classes and cannot recall ever hearing local traditional songs from the school broadcast, illustrating how local children are separated from local traditional song culture.

As Sgrol ma skyabs mentioned, local elders and some young locals who didn't attend school continue to appreciate local traditional songs. Local native Lhun 'grub worries his children and grandchildren will be unable to sing *dmangs glu* very much in Tibetan (Lhun 'grub 2020:207-208). Pad+ma rig 'dzin voices similar concerns focused on Smyung gnas:

In 2019, many children attended school and had never experienced Smyung gnas. Furthermore, some children may not be acquainted unless they are from the same local community. ... It would be very positive if local primary school students were allowed to join in Smyung gnas in recognition of the value of traditional cultural activities that are rapidly changing (2021:69).

Local traditional lyrics relate to a pre-modern lifestyle, e.g., black yak-hair tents, saddles, wild yaks, rifles, and livestock, igniting elders' vivid memories of their past. However, local youth did not have such experiences.

Sbra mthing smug sgo dar khra khra can,  
The black yak-hair tent with colorful door-flag

Lug sprin dkar 'dra zhig ri la skor,  
Sheep grazing on the mountain resemble a white cloud

Rta 'do ba ri dwags 'dra bo  
The horse I ride resembles a wild animal

Most local traditional songs are performed without musical instruments, further distancing them from today's "modern" youth.

## CONCLUSION

Drawing on personal experiences attending a local love song gathering in 2003 at my clan's summer pasture, visiting love song clubs in town, and observing *dmangs glu* performances during Lo sar and weddings, this paper specifically explores local traditional songs and musical instruments and how and when they became popular in my home area. By employing Sgrol ma skyabs' illustration of a local *dmangs glu* singer via his life story, this paper further reveals the local lifestyle, songscape, and local traditional music culture. By examining *dmangs glu*, *la ye*, and *rdung len*, including Tibetan musical instruments in Mdo ba, this paper also shows how the advent of "development" and "modernity" such as radios, TVs, phones, and Apps in Tibetan communities influence local *dmangs glu* culture and songscape transition from traditional to modern, including changing interests in song genres.

Again, this paper is not about *all* Tibetan traditional songs but rather *dmangs glu*, *la ye*, and *rdung len* in Mdo ba.

Tibetan traditional songs and singing are not immune from contemporary social and cultural influences. For example, I interviewed five young Mdo ba residents and 133 Tibetan teenagers in Dar lag County, Mgo log Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture who expressed limited interest in Tibetan traditional songs. In contrast, modern songs keenly interested them, which they accessed through the internet and mobile phones via WeChat and Kwai,<sup>1</sup> among other platforms.

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<sup>1</sup> Kuaishou (Kwai) was the second-largest Chinese short-video

While Mdo ba Tibetans remain pastoral, no families used yak-hair tents in 2023. Instead, they lived in canvas tents from the late fifth lunar month to the late eighth lunar month or in brick houses in the Town Center and winter camps. Fencing and assigned pastures have ended local mobile pastoralism.

Traditional Tibetan songs may be compared to wearing Tibetan robes and eating *rtsam ba*, with interest reflecting age and generation. For example, as mentioned above, older people enjoy traditional local songs while younger people are less interested. Meanwhile, Tibetan robes were worn daily by many older local women but rarely by girls attending school or who had attended school. However, at large gatherings (horseraces, Smyung gnas) in the 2010s and early 2020s, only some attendees younger than fifteen did *not* wear Tibetan robes. These were moments when there was a desire to express Tibetan identity and community, and the same was true on a smaller scale during small Lo sar gatherings and local weddings. While *rtsam ba* was a preferred food choice for older residents and rarely denigrated by any local, it was not a food of choice for young Mdo ba residents in 2023.

Nearly all Mdo ba preteens and teenagers attend or have attended government schools and thus were separated from Mdo ba elders for much of the year. These young people had close regular encounters with social media and all the contemporary global music it provided. Never directly experiencing nomadic life and the opportunities provided to sing and enrich a song repertoire with vocabulary and pastoralist metaphors resulted in declining interest in traditional Tibetan singing.

Most young Mdo ba Tibetans in 2023 are eager to see and experience the world and life beyond Mdo ba and much of what traditional Tibetan songs represent. Traditional songs and performances today are best understood as invoking nostalgic longing for a past somewhere on a continuum of fading to disappeared. In recognition of this, I encourage micro-studies of traditional Tibetan songs and music and all aspects of life in Tibetan

areas, particularly by local Tibetans, as life and culture rapidly change.

## PHOTOGRAPHS

FIG 1. Gyu lo (b. 1974) came to the bride's home with the groom and six companions and sang *dmangs glu* at Bsam 'grub rgyal's winter pasture in 2022 (Pad+ma).



FIG 2. Local *dmangs glu* singer Sha bo skyabs (b. 1975) sings *dmangs glu* at the groom's home as part of his neighbor's daughter's entourage (Mdo ba Town Center 2022, Pad+ma).





FIG 3 G.yung drung rgyal (b. 1976) sings a *ja glu* 'tea-song' soon after arriving at the groom's home with the bride and six companions in Mdo ba Town Center in 2022. He holds *ja dar* 'tea-silk' that he offered to a cook. The groom's side then offered a meal (unidentified photographer).





FIG 4. Snying lo (b. 1965) sings *dmangs glu* at a *khang ston* 'new house celebration' and holds a white *kha btags* he raises and lowers following the song's rhythm while holding a microphone in his left hand (Mdo ba Town Center 2022, Pad+ma).



FIG 5. Rgya b+ha (b. 1958) responds to a *bcol glu* 'entrusting' 'enjoining' song' from the bride's side at the end of a wedding in Rin chen don 'grub's home in Mdo ba in 2019 (Bkra shis rab brtan).



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APPENDIX: TERMS AND SELECTED EXPLANATIONS
*dmangs*

- Goldstein et al. (2001): people, masses (828)
- Joschke (1881): the common people, populace, multitude, vulgar (422)
- Das (1902): the populace, mob, common folk (981)
- Stag 'bum thar (2016): mass (609)

*glu*

- Joschke (1881): song, tune (81)
- Das (1902): song (258)
- Huadan Zhaxi et al. (1994): song (53)
- Goldstein et al. (2001): song, to sing (210)
- Anton-Luca (2002): "*Glu* (folk song) and *la ye* (love song) make up two of the most popular song genres in A Mdo" (178).
- Anton-Luca (2002): Colloquial usage of the two terms *glu* and *la ye* carries a degree of ambiguity. While *glu* translates simply as 'song', it also means 'folk song'. *Glu*, as 'folk song', denotes A mdo folk songs in general (*dmangs glu*) and a specific genre within the latter for which no separate term exists. I employ *glu* to refer to this specialized genre (179).
- Li Yingxia (2008): "勒"是一种高亢悠扬、奔放自由、抒情优美的民歌。歌曲内容与藏族人民的的生活息息相关，无论是放牧、打猎 还是喜庆、休憩时，人们都会随口唱出"勒"来，可以说是最普遍、流传最广泛的曲种之一，擅长叙事和抒发情感，有着很强的艺术表现力 (74).

(My translation) "*Le*" is a type of *dmangs glu* with a high pleasant melody expressing emotion in free rhythm. The content of *le* is closely related to Tibetan life, whether during herding, hunting, celebrations, and leisure. We can say that it is one of the most common, widespread song genres.

- Craun (2011): The term *dmangs glu*, like the Chinese term 民歌 *min ge* (folk song), is used by some Tibetans to represent all genres of traditional folk songs created by the Tibetan people. Besides the generic term 'song', the second meaning of the term *glu* is a specific traditional genre of a cappella Amdo Tibetan folk songs. Within this genre, sub-categories exist. A sub-category of the broad *glu* genre is simply the *glu* praise ballad. Other *glu* sub-categories include cultural songs, question-and-answer songs, with songs,

and origin songs. Genres of folk songs that are not included in the Amdo Tibetan *glu* genre include sung dance music and vocal songs with instrumental music (79).

- Thurston (2012) writes: “*Dmangs glu* may be performed on a variety of occasions and have almost no restrictions on their performance” (57). ... In comparing *dmangs glu* and *la gzhas*, Thurston further suggests: *Mdangs glu* and *la gzhas* employ essentially the same register, meter, and metaphorical language as the speeches described above [*sa bshad*, *gnas bshad*]. Their natural metaphors cover a wide range of topics, including flora and fauna of the Plateau and significant geographical features (57).
- Stag 'bum thar (2016): song (130)
- G.yang skyabs rdo rje (2021): *Dmangs glu* are sung without instrumental accompaniment and are suitable for all audiences on happy occasions. *Dmangs glu* often praise mountains, rivers, forests, and environments that nurture people and compliment *bla ma*, parents, and well-known and kindhearted people (306).
- Skäl bzang rdo rje (2021): ལྷ་ཞེས་པ་ནི་དབྱངས་རྟའི་འདེགས་འཛོག་ལ་བརྒྱས་ནས་ལེན་གྱིན་པའི་དག་གི་རྒྱ་ཆུ་ཆུ་དུ་གོ་བར་འཐད་དོ། ཤོག་ངོས་ ༡༩ Glu zhes pa ni dbyangs rta'i 'degs 'jog la brgyus nas len gyin pa'i ngag gi sgyu rtsal du go bar 'thad do" (13).  
(My translation): *Glu* is an oral musical art with a melodic rhythm.
- Skäl bzang rdo rje (2021): ཨ་མ་དྲེ་དམངས་སྐྱ་ནི་གསལ་བྱེད་དཔེ་ཡིས་བརྒྱན་ཅིང་དོན་ཆེན་ཆོག་གིས་སྐྱན་པར་སྐྱལ་པའི་དག་གི་རྒྱ་ཆུ་སྐྱ་ན་མེད་པ་ཞིག་ཡིན། ཤོག་ངོས་ ༢༠ A mdo'i dmangs glu ni gsal byed dpe yis brgyan cing don chen tshig gis snyan par skul pa'i ngag gi sgyu rtsal bla na med pa zhig yin" (20)  
(My translation): A mdo *dmangs glu* is an oral art of metaphors and similes.
- Skäl bzang rdo rje (2021): ཨ་མ་དྲེ་དམངས་སྐྱ་ནི་བྱིད་ཆ་ནས་ཆོན་པ་གསུམ་གྱིས་བྱུང་ཅིང་ཟུ་མ་གཉིས་ནི་དཔེ་དང་བྱི་མ་གཉིས་ནི་དཔེ་ཅན་དུ་སྒྲུང་། ཤོག་ངོས་ ༢༡ A mdo'i dmangs glu ni spyi'i cha nas tshan pa gsum gyis grub cing snga ma gnyis ni dpe dang phyi ma gcig ni dpe can du snang (22).  
(My translation): *Dmangs glu* typically have three stanzas, with the first two being metaphors and the third stanza a simile.
- Sturman (2019): Wedding songs typically express good wishes for the new couple, though some express sadness at the departure of a son or daughter.

They include solo and choral songs (both in unison and antiphonally), divided into several types according to the various stages of elaborate wedding ceremonies, which may last several days. Drinking songs are sung at parties and typically praise important guests and urge them to enjoy themselves, while beer or liquor is offered in a bowl. *Lu* (*glu*, also the generic term for song, now also known as "folk songs," *dmangs-glu*) is another type of celebratory song. They are normally sung solo by a performer standing with their right arm extended while cupping their left hand to their ear (3).

- **Snying mo tshe ring (2017):** བོད་ཀྱི་དམངས་སྐུ་ལ་ནང་གསེས་ཀྱི་དབྱེ་བ་རགས་ཙམ་ཕྱེས་ན་ ༡. དལ་ཚོལ་གྱི་སྐུ་ རྩམ་གཞས། ཁྱུང་གཞས། འོ་མ་བཞོ་བའི་སྐུ། ཀུང་མ་འབྱུགས་པའི་སྐུ། ཀལྱལ་རྩེ་བའི་སྐུ། ཐགས་འཐག་པའི་སྐུ། ༢. སྐུ་ཁ་ཚར་ རྩམ་གཞས་པའི་སྐུ་དང་བསྟོད་སྐུ། ཁ་ཚར་སྐུ། ཉེན་འབྱེལ་གྱི་སྐུ། བཟ་ཤིས་འཛོག་པའི་སྐུ། ༣. སྐུ་ཤགས། ༤. ལ་གཞས། ༥. གཞས། ཤོག་ཚོས་ ༢༡ **Bod kyi dmangs glu la nang gses kyi dbye ba rags tsam phyes na.**

1. Ngal rtsol gyi glu (Ar gzhas, gyang gzhas, 'o ma bzho ba'i glu, gdung ma 'gyogs pa'i glu, g.yu rdung pa'i glu, thags 'thag pa'i glu). 2. glu kha mtshar (mgo rtsom pa'i glu dang bstod glu, kha mtshar, smreng glu, rten 'brel gyi glu, bkra shis 'jog pa'i glu). 3. glu shags. 4. la gzhas. 5. gzhas (21).

(My translation): Tibetan *dmangs glu* roughly include five categories; 1. Labor songs (concrete work songs, earth wall construction songs, milking songs, top roof beam placement songs, threshing songs, and weaving songs); 2. Songs of humor (songs of begging, praise songs, songs of humor, songs of lamentation, celebration songs, and songs of farewell); 3. *Glu shags* (competing by answering the content of one song with the words/content of another); 4. Love songs; and 5. Modern songs.

### *rdung len*

- Joschke (1881), Das (1902), Bell (1920), Pad+ma rdo rje (1989), Huadan Zhaxi (1994), Goldstein (2001), Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las (2002), and Stag 'bum thar (2016) do not list *rdung len*.

### *la ye*

- Goldstein (2001): songs sung on mountains by herders (1057). "La ye" is not listed in Joschke (1881), Das (1902), Bell (1920), Pad+ma rdo rje (1989), Huadan Zhaxi (1994), and Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las (2002).

- **Stag 'bum thar (2016):** གཞི་རྒྱ་ལྟེ་ལ་སྤྱུ། ༡.ཨ་མདོའི་དམངས་ཁྲོད་ཀྱི་སྤྱ་གཞས་རིགས་ཤིག་གྱེ་ཚོགས་སྤྱིར་པལ་ཆེ་བ་  
ཡིག་འབྲུ་བདུན་ཅན་ཡིན་ལ་ནང་དོན་ནི་ཨོ་མོའི་བཅེ་དུང་སྟོན་བ་གཙོ་ཆེ། ཤོག་ངོས་ ༥༠། **1. Ri glu ste la glu 2. A**  
**mdo'i dmangs khrod kyi glu gzhaz rigs shig ste. Tshig sbyor phal che ba yig**  
**'bru bdun can yin la. Nang don ni pho mo'i brtse dung ston pa gtso che**  
**(601).**

(My translation) 1. mountain song, 2. A type of A mdo song, most verses consist of seven syllables, and the content is about love between men and women.

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## TIBETAN TERMS

'ba' stod pad+ma dpang rgyal

འབའ་སྟོད་པད་དབང་རྒྱལ།

'brong rw'i sgra snyan

འབྲོང་རའི་སྒྲ་སྟན།

'bum mtsho skyid འབུམ་མཚོ་སྐྱིད།

'ja' mo འཇའ་མོ།

'jam dbyangs bzhad pa

འཇམ་དབྱངས་བཟད་པ།

a khu pad ma ཨ་ཁུ་པད་མ།

a khu sman tog ཨ་ཁུ་སྐྱུན་རྟོག།

a mdo ཨ་མདོ།

bag ston བག་སྟོན།

bcol glu བཙལ་གླུ།

bde chen bya btang kun dga'

ཅོས་ཤེས་བདེ་ཆེན་བྱ་བྲང་ཀུན་དགའ་

ཆོས་འཕེལ།

bde mo 'jog pa'i skor

བདེ་མོ་འཇོག་པའི་སྐོར།

bde skyid tshe ring

བདེ་སྐྱིད་ཆེ་རིང་།

bla brang ལྷ་བང་།

bla brang ma ལྷ་བང་མ།

bla ma ལྷ་མ།

blon chen ལྷོན་ཆེན།

bkra shis 'jog pa'i glu

བཀྲ་ཤིས་འཇོག་པའི་གླུ།

bod gling བོད་གླིང་།

bod kha ba can gyi pha khu

རྒྱལ་བོད་ཁ་བ་ཅན་གྱི་ཕ་ཁུ་རྒྱལ།

bod kyi dmangs glu 'gran sdur

སཀའ་སྟོན་པའི་བྱ་དགའ་

gzensg skyes stsol ba'i

དགེ་སྟོན་གཉིས་པའི་བྱ་དགའ་གཞི་སྐྱོལ་བའི་

སྐུ་སྐུ་བས་གཉིས་པའི་བྱ་དགའ་གཞི་སྐྱོལ་བའི་

དགོང་ཚོགས།  
 bon po བོན་པོ།  
 brtson 'grus rgya mtso  
 བརྩོན་འགྲུས་རྩུ་མཚོ།  
 bsam 'grub rgyal བསམ་འབྲུབ་རྩུལ།  
 bsang chu བསང་ཆུ།  
 bsod nams bkra shis  
 བསོད་ནམས་བརྒྱ་ཤིས།  
 bstod glu བསྟོད་གླུ།  
 bzhi ba'i smyung gnas  
 བཞི་བའི་སྤྱང་གནས།  
 chos skyong skyabs  
 ཚོས་སྟོང་སྤྱབས།  
 chos thog ཚོས་ཐོག  
 chu dmar leb ཆུ་དམར་ལེབ།  
 chu khog ཆུ་ཁོག  
 dar zhing དར་ཞིང་།  
 dar zhing bde 'dzoms dga'  
 tshal gling  
 དར་ཞིང་བདེ་འཛོམས་དགའ་ཚལ་གླིང་།  
 dbal mang paN Di ta  
 དབལ་མང་པཎ་ཌི་ཏ།  
 dbus gtsang དབུས་གཙང་།  
 dga' ldan དགའ་ཚན།  
 dge 'dun rgya mtsho  
 དགེ་འདུན་རྩུ་མཚོ།  
 dkon mchog དགོན་མཚོག  
 dmangs glu དམངས་གླུ།  
 dpal mgon དཔལ་མགོན།  
 dpon skor དཔོན་སྟོར།  
 dri glu འི་གླུ།  
 g.yu 'brug གཡུ་འབྲུག  
 g.yu rngog bsam gtan rgya  
 mtsho གཡུ་རྟོག་བསམ་གཏན་རྩུ་མཚོ།  
 g.yung drung rgyal གཡུང་རྩུང་རྩུལ།  
 gcan tsha གཅན་ཚ།  
 gcan tsha thang གཅན་ཚ་ཐང་།

gcod las གཙོང་ལས།  
 gcod pa don grub གཙོང་པ་དོན་གྲུབ།  
 gdu b+he གདུ་མེ།  
 ge sar གེ་སར།  
 gling bu གླིང་བུ།  
 glu གླུ།  
 glu bar mo 'di dang gcig 'dra  
 yin གླུ་བར་མ་འདི་དང་གཅིག་འདྲ་ཡིན།  
 glu bar mo bar nas gnan nga  
 zig གླུ་བར་མ་བར་ནས་གནང་ང་ཟེག  
 glu bar mo dbugs kyis mi  
 lcogs gi  
 གླུ་བར་མ་དབུགས་ཀྱིས་མི་ཚུགས་གི།  
 glu dbyangs གླུ་དབྱངས།  
 glu gar rgyal གླུ་གར་རྩུལ།  
 glu shags གླུ་ཤགས།  
 gnam thar tshe ring  
 གནམ་ཐར་ཚེ་རིང་།  
 gnas 'gro bu mo གནས་འགྲོ་བུ་མོ།  
 gnas bshad གནས་བཤད།  
 gu ru གུ་རུ།  
 gya ston གྱ་སྟོན།  
 gyang glu གྱང་གླུ།  
 ja dar ཇ་དར།  
 ja glu ཇ་གླུ།  
 kan lho ཀན་ལྷོ།  
 kan su'u ཀན་སུ་འུ།  
 khyod rang dmangs glu la  
 dga' 'am deng rabs glu  
 dbyangs la dga' rgyu  
 mtshan ci རྩོད་རང་དམངས་གླུ་ལ་ཉན་པར་  
 དགའ་འམ་དེང་རབས་གླུ་དབྱངས་ལ་ཉན་པར་དགའ།  
 རྩུ་མཚན་ཅི།  
 kha b'i zhabs rje ཁ་བའི་ཞབས་རྗེ།  
 kha btags ཁ་བཏགས།  
 khang ston ཁང་སྟོན།  
 khri ka ཁྲི་ཀ།

khyu lu ལུ་ལུ།  
 klu mo ལུ་མོ།  
 klu thar rgyal ལུ་ཐར་རྒྱལ།  
 kun bzang rdo rje ཀུན་བཟང་རྡོ་རྗེ།  
 la ye ལ་ཡེ།  
 la gzhas ལ་གཞས།  
 lcags byams ལྷགས་བྱམས།  
 ldong la re ལྷང་ལ་རེ།  
 lha mo ལྷ་མོ།  
 lhun 'grub ལུན་འགྲུབ།  
 lo sar ལོ་སར།  
 lo yang lo ལོ་ཡང་ལོ།  
 lug sprin dkar 'dra zhig ri la skor

ལྷག་སྒྲིན་དཀར་འདེའིག་རི་ལ་སྐོར།  
 mdo ba མདོ་བ།  
 mdo ba bon rgya མདོ་བ་བོན་རྒྱ།  
 mdo sngags dar rgyas gling

མདོ་སྐགས་དར་བྱས་སྒྲིང་།  
 mdzo མདོ།  
 mgar rtse མགར་རྩེ།  
 mgo log མགོ་ལོག།  
 mgo skor མགོ་སྐོར།  
 mkha' 'gro mtsho མཁའ་འགོ་མཚོ།  
 mkhar byams མཁར་བྱམས།  
 mkhyen 'grub མཁྱེན་འགྲུབ།  
 mnga' ris མངའ་རིས།  
 mnga' ris sgra snyan

མངའ་རིས་སྒྲ་སྒྲན།  
 mthun sgril gyi rang sgra  
 མཐུན་སྒྲིལ་གྱི་རང་སྒྲ།  
 mtsho lho མཚོ་ལྷོ།  
 mtsho lho khul rgyang sgrog  
 brnyan 'phrin khang

མཚོ་ལྷོ་ཁྱུང་སྒྲོག་བརྟན་འཕྲིན་ཁང་།  
 mtsho nub མཚོ་རུབ།  
 mtsho sngon མཚོ་སྒྲོང།  
 myi skal མྱི་སྐལ།

na chung rtсед ra ན་ཅུང་རྩེད་ར།  
 nam mkha' ནམ་མཁའ།  
 ne'u ston gyi glu ནེ་འུ་སྟོན་གྱི་གླུ།  
 pad+ma པད་མ།  
 pad+ma rdo rje པད་མ་རྡོ་རྗེ།  
 pad ma bsam 'grub

པད་མ་བསམ་འགྲུབ།  
 pad+ma rig 'dzin པད་མ་རིག་འཛིན།  
 phun tshogs dbang rgyal

ཕུན་ཚོགས་དབང་བྱལ།  
 phyng glu ཕྱིང་གླུ།  
 ra rgan ར་རྒན།  
 ra ston gyi glu ར་སྟོན་གྱི་གླུ།  
 rang grol rdo rje རང་གྲོལ་རྡོ་རྗེ།  
 rdo red རྡོ་རེད།  
 rdo rje rab brtan རྡོ་རྗེ་རབ་བརྟན།  
 rdung len རུང་ལེན།  
 reb gong རེབ་གོང་།  
 reb gong pa 'jigs med bsam

grub རེབ་གོང་པ་འཇིགས་མེད་བསམ་གྲུབ།  
 rgya b+ha རྒྱ་མ།  
 rgya gling རྒྱ་གླིང་།  
 rgya mtsho རྒྱ་མཚོ།  
 ri spyang རི་སྐལ།  
 rin chen don 'grub

རིན་ཆེན་དོན་འགྲུབ།  
 rin kho རིན་ཁོ།  
 rkang gling རྒྱང་གླིང་།  
 rlung rta sde bzhi རུང་རྟ་སྡེ་བཞི།  
 rma chu རམ་ཅུ།  
 rma lho རམ་ལྷོ།  
 rogs 'gal ba'i skor

རོགས་འགལ་བའི་སྐོར།  
 rogs dran pa'i skor  
 རོགས་དྲན་པའི་སྐོར།  
 rogs mthun pa'i skor  
 རོགས་མཐུན་པའི་སྐོར།

rogs rtsod pa'i skor

རོགས་རྩོད་པའི་སྐོར།

rong bo grub chen རོང་བོ་གུབ་ཆེན།

rta 'do ba ri dwags 'dra bo

རྟ་འདྲོ་བ་རི་དྲགས་འདྲ་བོ།

rta kho རྟ་ཁོ།

rta rdo རྟ་རྟོ།

rta mgrin tshe lo རྟ་མགོན་ཙེ་ལོ།

rtse khog རྟེ་ཁོག།

rtse mgo རྟེ་མགོ།

ru khag རུ་ཁག།

sa bshad ས་བཤད།

sangs rgyas སངས་རྒྱས།

sangs rgyas bkra shis

སངས་རྒྱས་བཟ་ཤིས།

sbra mthing smug sgo dar

སྐྱེ་མཐེང་སྐྱུག་སྟོང་མ་ཅན།

sg'i snga ri 'di la chags

སྐག་ཇོག་སྐའི་སྤ་རི་འདི་ལ་ཆགས་ཤིག་འཇོག།

sgra snyan སྐྱེ་སྟན།

sgro rong bo སྐྱོ་རོང་བོ།

sgrol dkar skyabs སྐྱོལ་དཀར་སྐྱབས།

sgrol ma སྐྱོལ་མ།

sgrol ma skyabs སྐྱོལ་མ་སྐྱབས།

sgrung glu སྐྱང་གླུ།

sha bo skyabs ཤ་བོ་སྐྱབས།

sha bo bkra shis ཤ་བོ་བཟ་ཤིས།

sha bo don 'grub ཤ་བོ་དོན་འབྱུབ།

shags glu ཤགས་གླུ།

shar skal ldan rgya mtsho

ཤར་སྐལ་ལྷན་བྱ་མཚོ།

sher bstan ཤེར་བསྐྱན།

si khron སི་ཁྲོན།

skad 'phrin སྐད་འཕྲིན།

skal bzang bkra shis

སྐལ་བཟང་བཟ་ཤིས།

skal bzang rdo rje སྐལ་བཟང་རྡོ་རྗེ།

skal bzang bstan 'dzin

སྐལ་བཟང་བསྐྱན་འཛིན།

skyo glu སྐྱོ་གླུ།

smyung gnas སྐྱུང་གནས།

snying rje na rje rgyu gan na

'dug ལྷིང་རྗེ་ན་རྗེ་བྱ་གན་ན་འདུག།

sog po སོག་པོ།

stag lha rgyal སྟག་ལྷ་རྒྱལ།

stag 'bum thar སྟག་འབུམ་ཐར།

thun te ཐུན་ཏེ།

thun rin ཐུན་རིན།

tshe brtan ཙེ་བརྟན།

tshe dpa' ཙེ་དཔའ།

tshe dpal skybas ཙེ་དཔལ་སྐྱབས།

tshe ring ཙེ་རིང་།

tshe ring dbang 'dus

ཙེ་རིང་དབང་འདུས།

tsho ba ཙེ་བ།

yo lag ཡོ་ལག།

yul shul ཡུལ་ཤུལ།

zi ling ཟེ་ལིང་།

## CHINESE TERMS

Anduo 安多

Changba 唱吧

Dari 达日

Deang 德昂

Duowa 多哇

Gannan 甘南

Gansu 甘肃

Guashize 瓜什则

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Guide 贵得	Qinghai weishi 青海卫视
Guoluo 果洛	Qukuhu 曲库呼
Hainan 海南	Qumalai 曲麻莱
Hainan zhou guangbo	<i>mu</i> 亩
dianshitai 海南州广播电视台	Tongde 同德
Haixi 海西	Tongren 同仁
Henan 河南	Tsingtao, Qingdao 青岛
Huangnan 黄南	<i>weixin</i> 微信
Huadan Zhaxi 华旦扎西	Xiahe 夏河
Maqu 玛曲	Xining 西宁
<i>minge</i> 民歌	Yushu 玉树
PaPa 啪啪	Zeku 泽库
Qinghai 青海	Zhiyue 直跃